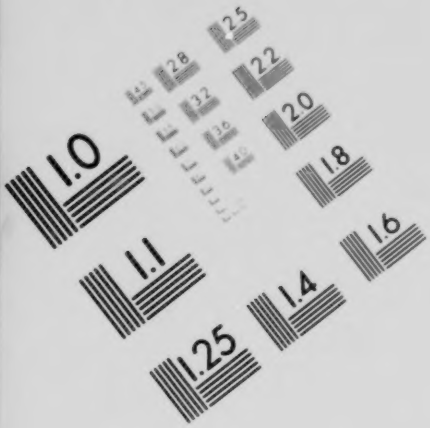

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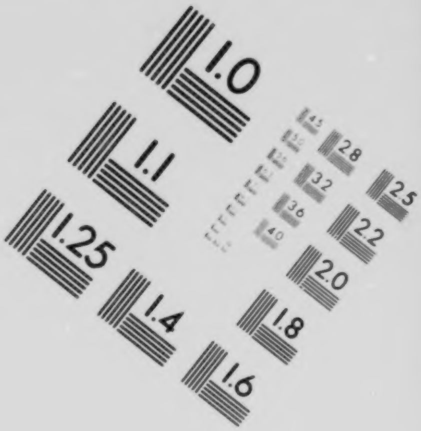

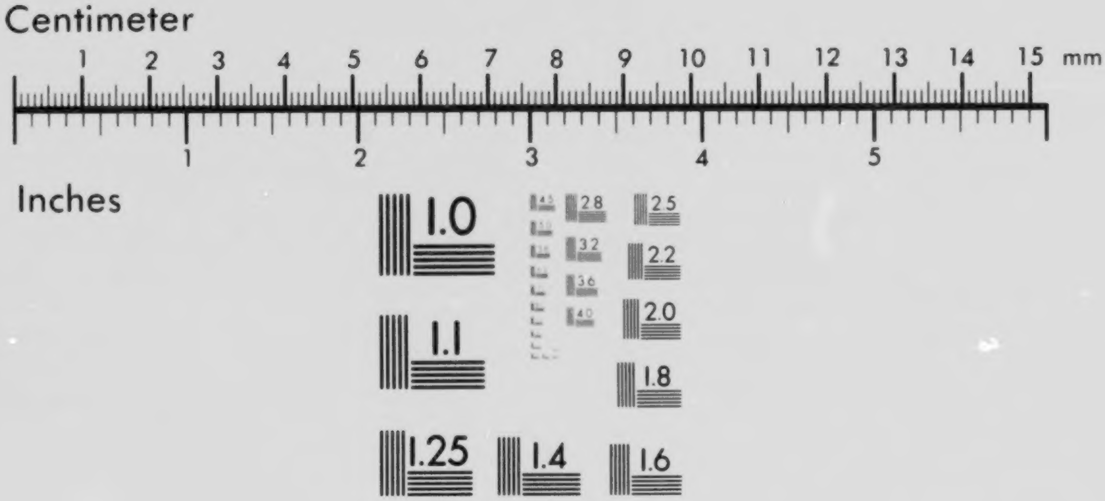
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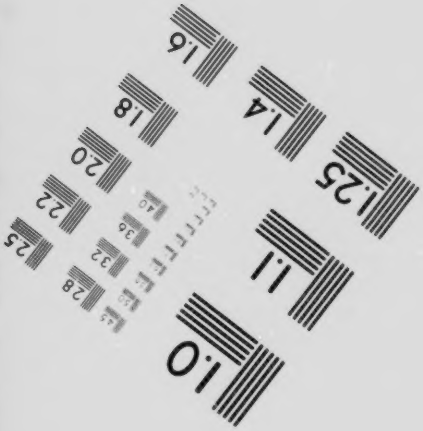

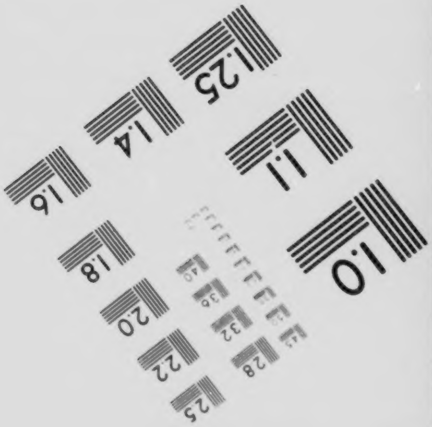

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SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING & CURRICULUM CENTER
University of Hawai'i at Manoa

VIRTUAL
CONNECTIONS

TECHNICAL REPORT #8

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

ONLINE ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS FOR NETWORKING LANGUAGE LEARNERS

edited by MARK WARSCHAUER

SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING & CURRICULUM CENTER
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Next, I would like to thank the students who participated in these projects and activities, and who are in essence the reason this book exists. In particular I thank the numerous students who have provided feedback, suggestions, and advice and who have lent their texts as examples which appear in these pages.

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INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that online communication is an important new tool for language teaching. Students can now share documents, texts, and ideas with their teacher or classmates 24 hours a day, from school, work, or home. They can communicate quickly, conveniently, and inexpensively with an unlimited number of native speakers or other learners of the target language all over the world. They have instantaneous access to a wide range of target language texts, audio, and video resources from data-bases around the globe.

Yet this technology is developing so rapidly that it can often be difficult or even overwhelming to harness — somewhat like to trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant.

This book is designed to make that process easier. Over the past year, over various electronic discussion lists, bulletin boards, and computer conferences, I've communicated with hundreds of teachers around the world who are using online communication for language teaching. These teachers have been generous enough to share their experiences and ideas, and the result is the most comprehensive collection assembled to date of online projects and activities for language learning. They are presented here not as exact recipes to be followed but rather as models and examples, so that those exploring new areas will not have to reinvent the wheel.

The book is more though than a collection of activities. Many of the entries describe ongoing projects that your class may join up with. And all of the entries provide specific contact information: e-mail addresses or World Wide Web pages of the contributors or of the resources that they describe. I hope the book will thus itself be a valuable networking tool, and I encourage readers to contact the authors with your thoughts, ideas, or questions.

The book is divided into three main sections: Electronic Communication in a Single Class, Cross-Cultural Communication, and Using Online Resources. Each of these sections is divided into chapters which group together a number of entries on a single theme. The chapters are briefly introduced at the beginning of each section.

Then there are two appendices, both containing chapters written by Jean LeLoup and Robert Ponterio of the State University of New York at Cortland. The first provides an in-depth description of FLTEACH, which is the main electronic resource in the United States for the sharing of ideas among foreign language teachers. The second gives a practical introduction to the Internet tools mentioned in the rest of the book, and will thus be an invaluable resource for readers who are new to online communications. A list of suggested further readings closes the book.

Of course a book like this is never really complete. I hope you and your students will take these ideas and make your own virtual connections, and then find the appropriate way — perhaps through e-mail, the World Wide Web, or a new online technology we've not yet heard of — to share your activities and projects with the rest of us.

PART I:
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION IN A SINGLE CLASS

Many teachers probably believe that the sole purpose of online communications is to connect learners with people around the world. However, as the entries in this section illustrate, there are numerous creative ways to connect your students with each other.

Teacher-Student Dialogue discusses new ways of connecting teachers and students, ranging from electronic dialogue journals to virtual office-hours. In *E-mail Interaction*, we learn of creative ways of using e-mail to increase student interaction. *Bulletin Boards* takes a fresh look at an electronic version of the old classroom stand-by. *Supporting Student Writing* shows how online communication in a class can be used in teaching writing. *Topics, Topics and More Topics* provides a sequential listing of 17 topics and activities to move your students from informal introductions to academic debate. Real-Tim*e Rapping* illustrates ways of using local area networks to carry out synchronous communication in a single class.

TEACHER-STUDENT DIALOGUE

ELECTRONIC DIALOGUE JOURNALS

Context

This activity was used in a second semester Spanish class at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. It could be used at any level, but the technique is strongly recommended for beginners and intermediate students since the task is undemanding, non-threatening, and helpful for building confidence.

Description

The activity is basically an e-mail version of the writing technique called "dialogue journals." The dialogue journals began in ESL classes and then in FL/SL classes to develop students' writing skills in a way that emphasizes communication rather than accuracy (without, however, disregarding the latter). The rationale behind this technique is that the students benefit from the writing situation to communicate their messages, while maintaining a conversational format. Research has shown a direct connection between the use of dialogue journals and an increase in oral fluency. Thus, both writing and oral skills are improved. There is a "dialogue" with the instructor, so there is a very specific audience and a purpose to communicate. Students have time to think and monitor their performance. Grammatical accuracy, however, plays a secondary role compared to the conveyance of the message, which plays a primary role. Instructors do not correct errors in an overt fashion. Instead they reply to the students' entries in a meaningful way, showing interest in the content of the message by reacting in a personal manner and requesting additional information, so that the conversation keeps going for a length of time. Dialogue journals provide students with an opportunity to develop fluency without constantly worrying about form. The instructor's responses are models of accurate writing, so grammatical corrective feedback is provided automatically.

Traditionally, this technique has been an in-class activity. All the students in the classroom are allowed 5-10 minutes to write in a notebook. The notebooks are collected periodically for the instructors to answer. The e-mail version used in my classes did not necessarily involve all the students, but instead was a voluntary activity, with an impact on the students' participation grade. In addition, the writing activity took place out of class, whenever the interlocutors could access a computer terminal. Each participant needed an account, which could be obtained from the Computer Center for free (although some of my students participated from their own terminals at home using different private online services, like American On-Line and Compuserve.) Only a few students participated at the beginning, but, little by little, others became interested. By the end of the semester, I had a considerable collection of messages to answer. In addition, the messages became longer and more elaborate. I could observe how some started to use my own phrases and expressions.

The followings are some samples of the students' unedited messages:

> Hola Sennora Gonzalez,
> Buenos dias, como esta el cafe? Es lastima que perdi clase. A mi no me gusta perder mis clases. A veces, no puedo Levantarme de la cama. La situacion de las residencias es la mierda. Siempre hay demasiado ruido, y hace dos noches, no pude dormirme. Pues el proximo semestre mepropono vivir afuera de la universidad, en un apartamento.
> No se exactamente lo que quiero hacer en el futuro. Quiero emplear mis talentos, pero primero, tengo que discubirlos. Pienso que podria aprender mas espannol. Es la Verdad que el mejor medio aprenderlo Es practicar con espannoles, o hispanicos. Para mi, aprender una lingua es aprender de la vida. Tengo ganas de aprender espannol para esta razon tambien. Si quiero hablar espannol con soltura. Podrias decir que estoy un sonnador, y no es facil para un sonnador saber que quiere hacer, especialmente en una perspectiva profesional.
> WCD

Translation:
Hello, Ms. Gonzalez,
Good morning. How is the coffee? It is shame that I missed class. I do not like missing classes. Sometime I cannot get up from bed. The situation at the dorms is bad. There is always too much noise, and I could not go to sleep two nights ago. So I have decided to live off-campus next semester in an apartment. I do not really know what I want to do in the future. I want to use my skills, but I have to discover them first. I think that I could learn more Spanish. The truth is that the best way is to practice with Spaniards or Hispanics. To me, to learn a language is to learn about the life. I feel like learning Spanish for this reason. Yes, I want to speak Spanish fluently. You may say I am a dreamer, and it is not easy for a dreamer to know what to do, especially in a professional perspective.
WCD

> Hola! Como estas? No ceeo que el examen es el miercoles!! Hay tres examenes este dia. Que terible! No me gusta hacer muchas examenes en un dia. Ojala que es facil.
> El fin de semana pasado fue a Houston en un avion para visitar mis amigos y me diverti mucho! Me encontre un hombre muy guapo de Venezuela en un club. Fue muy comico cuando nosotros hablemos. El no intende ingles bueno, solamjente esta en estados unidos dos meses. Por eso yo hable en espanol y poco ingles.
> ADIOS!

Translation:
Hi! How are you? I can't believe the exam is next Wednesday!! There are three exams that day. How awful! I don't like taking many exams in one day. I hope it's an easy one.
I went to Houston by plane last weekend, to visit my friends, and I had a lot of fun! I met a very handsome guy from Venezuela at a club. It was very funny when we talked to each other. He could not understand English well. He is in the United States for only two months. That is why I spoke in Spanish, and a little bit in English.
GOOD BYE!

Hola Senora,
Recibe tu mensaje, y estoy muy interesado en “Gopher”. Pero no se nada para “Gopher”. Por favor digame la informacion para los paises Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina. Es un buena idea y un buena opportunidad para aprender espanol. Pienso que los muchachos latinamericanos son MUYYYY guapos!!! Me gustaria conocer un hombre. :-)
Lo siento, el martes mi reloj no functione y yo duermo mas tarde de la clase!
Fuiste a mi trabajo ayer? Yo trabajo despues de uno de la tarde todos los dias. Cuando tu fuiste?
Bueno, hasta luego,
cathy

Translation:
Hello, Ma'am,
I received your message and am very interested in “Gopher”. But I do not know anything about “Gopher”. Please tell me information about Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina. It is a good idea and a good opportunity to learn Spanish. I think that Latin American young men are VEEEERY handsome!!! I'd like to meet a guy. :–)
I am sorry, but last Tuesday my alarm did not work and I slept until later than the class!
Did you go to my work yesterday? I work after one in the afternoon everyday. When did you go?
Okay, see you later,
cathy

Evaluation

The benefits of using dialogue journals in ESL, SL and FL classes have already been described (Peyton and Reed, 1990; Omaggio, 1993). The advantages of implementing this technique through e-mail versus through conventional means (in-class paper-and-pencil) are various: first of all, by making dialogue journals a voluntary activity, the exchange becomes a spontaneous one in which the students will participate when they really have something to communicate (students that choose not to participate can benefit from other more conventional in-class writing activities and assignments). The activity becomes an authentic, purposeful, real-life one. Also, the five to ten minutes usually allowed for writing dialogue journals during class time may not be enough for every student (although it may be too much time for others!). By using e-mail, students will set their own time.

In addition, the instructors will not have to face a pile of 20–30 notebooks to answer every time they collect the dialogue journals. Instead, they can answer the students messages at the pace they arrive, whenever they have time to log on. Furthermore, no class time is being consumed. Depending on the frequency with which the activity is done in class, the five to ten minutes that dialogue journals usually take is valuable contact time that could be utilized in collective, communication-rich, oral activities, versus in individual, private, writing activities.

Lastly, depending on the students, this may be the first time that some of them have the opportunity to interact with the Internet. Once the students have been initiated, instructors can introduce them to the rest of the electronic marvels available through this revolutionary medium. Particular trips to different Internet sites related to the target culture can be assigned as homework. An endless list of possibilities is offered to the language teachers (contributions included in this volume are good examples of them). As educators, it is our responsibility to take advantage of these possibilities and to offer our students the best and most effective educational tools to motivate them and enhance their SL/FL language skills.

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Contributor

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DIALOGUE JOURNALING AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Context

This project explored the effectiveness of e-mail as a writing tool in doing dialogue journaling in an English as a Second Language (ESL) reading and writing classroom. The setting for this project was in an intermediate level reading and writing class in the American English Institute Program on the campus of a large public university.

Description

This project involved a continuous written exchange between student and teacher over a period of nine weeks. Two groups of students in the class wrote dialogue journals to their instructor by the use of two different media: e-mail for one group and paper and pencil for the other group. The instructor used e-mail to write to the students in the computer group and an electronic typewriter to write to the students in the paper group. The students could write about anything of personal interest and concern. There was no required length of student dialogue journal entries. Dialogue journal writing did not take up any of the class time. The students in both groups wrote their dialogue journals outside of class time. The students in the e-mail group sent their dialogue journals to the instructor by the use of e-mail every day. The students in the paper-and-pencil group wrote their dialogue journals on pieces of paper and turned them in to the instructor every morning before the class started. The dialogue journal writing was not a required writing assignment. If the students decided not to write, it didn't affect their course grade.

E-mail dialogue journaling can be used with any language and level. The following steps are recommended for successful implementation of any e-mail dialogue journal project:

1. Choose the most user-friendly software available.
2. Continually train students in how to make the best use of the computer system and software. One-shot training in the beginning may not be enough.
3. Provide guidance to students on how to write dialogue journals. Students might focus overly on mechanics while ignoring the communicative aspect. It can be helpful to make explicit the purpose of dialogue journaling and provide some samples of journal entries from previous semesters. Distributing and discussing journal entries from the current semester (with permission) can also be beneficial.
4. Decide ahead of time how dialogue journals will be credited.

In order to make sure that every student participates in e-mail dialogue journaling, you might want to make dialogue journaling a requirement of the course. If students fulfill the requirement, they could get credits, for example, for 10% of their total grade.

Evaluation

Students enjoyed writing dialogue journals in an e-mail environment. They considered that e-mail made the process of dialogue journaling easy and convenient. E-mail participants considered it an advantage that they did not need to coordinate a time to communicate with each other and they did not need to deal with paper work. One student wrote in her e-mail entry, "It is a nice thing that I can talk to you by using my fingers. This is a very special experience to me."

It was found out that e-mail journals differed from paper journals. Due to its speed, e-mail created a different writing mode which parallels phone or face to face conversation. E-mail writings were spontaneous and informal. The students writing by e-mail asked a greater variety of questions than did the students writing by paper-and-pencil.

In addition, e-mail increased the amount of interaction between the students and the instructor. The e-mail students wrote more frequently and wrote more per writing session than did the paper and pencil students. The instructor wrote more per writing session in response to the students in the e-mail group than she did in response to the students in the paper-and-pencil group.

In this situation, e-mail dialogue journaling in this project was conducted only between the instructor and the student. However, the unique features of e-mail can easily expand the dialogue journal beyond the range of the student and the instructor. During the interviews, the students in this project expressed a strong desire to communicate with each other via e-mail. It is recommended that future projects take full advantages of this powerful communication tool. In doing dialogue journaling, the students can be paired with other students at a higher language level. The students also can be paired with other competent language users on or off the campus. In this way, e-mail offers the opportunity for ESL students to interact with more of the people who interest them while helping them in their language development.

Contributor

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VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS ON IRC (INTERNET RELAY CHAT)

Context

The following was used with university students of 2nd-year Japanese. It could work equally well with students of other languages and levels.

Description

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) allows people all over the Internet to 'talk' to each other on the keyboard in real-time. When you are on IRC, everything you type will instantly be transmitted around the world to other users who are sitting in front of their computers that are also connected to IRC. They can then respond to you right away. More than one person can talk at the same time. There exist hundreds of channels with various topics on IRC. Users can select a channel that interests them and join the discussion.

Using this multi-user and multi-channel chatting network, a teacher can create his or her virtual office on IRC where students can join in to talk to the teacher without actually visiting the teacher's office. For example, I have my virtual office hour on IRC between 4 and 5 p.m. every Wednesday. On Wednesdays at 4 p.m., I open a channel on IRC called *#jimusho* (it means "office" in Japanese) to which my students can connect. The name of the channel is known to students in advance.

Students can ask specific questions about the material covered in class or just have a chat. If more than one person joins the channel and someone wants to talk to me in private, he or she can do so by selecting a private message function of the IRC client. Although the use of English is not expressly prohibited, students are encouraged to use Japanese as much as possible.

If you have a large number of students, you can assign a small group of students (four to five) each week to talk to you in Japanese on IRC in real-time. You can even select a topic for small group discussion.

In order to be on IRC, you must run an IRC client program which links to the IRC network through another program called a server. Servers pass messages from user to user over the IRC network. Major universities usually have a IRC server installed in their computer systems. It is best to use a server that is the closest to you geographically. Servers available for connection include:

cs.bu.edu
irc.colorado.edu
irc.caltech.edu
irc.uiuc.edu
dewey.cc.utexas.edu

You can use IRC in Japanese on any platform with a personal computer and an Internet connection (via modem or Ethernet). The following list outlines the software needed for Macintosh, DOS/Windows, and UNIX platforms:

MACINTOSH

Japanese Language Kit or *KanjiTalk* (commercial products) for displaying Japanese characters,
ircle-J, Japanese capable IRC client, is available via ftp at:
totto.ics.kula.kyoto-u.ac.jp/pub/mac/comm

DOS/WINDOWS

DOS/V and *Windows-J* (Japanese equivalent of *MSDOS* and *Windows*)
Teraterm is a Japanese telnet program that is available via ftp at:
ftp.islandnet.com/Jack_Walraven/Japanese/ttermv05.exe
irchat, an IRC client available via ftp at:
ftp.funet.fi/pub/unix/irc/Emacs/irchat

UNIX

Mule, Japanese version of *Emacs* available via ftp at:
etlport.etl.go.jp/pub/mule
SKK, a Japanese input system available via ftp at:
ftp.uwtc.washington.edu/pub/Japanese/unix/skk
irchat, IRC client available via ftp at:
ftp.funet.fi/pub/unix/irc/Emacs/irchat

For detailed information on IRC, please read the manual called IRCprimer which can be found at the ftp site of the Boston University: *cs-ftp.bu.edu/irc/support*

Evaluation

IRC provides teachers with an alternative way of keeping communication open with students. Although it is best to meet with students face to face for discussion of academic or personal matters, there are times when you can not do that for various reasons. The use of IRC helps increase accessibility of the teacher to students. You can do something similar with e-mail, but in e-mail communication there exists a time gap between when a message is sent and received. In IRC, students can receive instant feedback from the teacher and carry on a conversation.

Contributor

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¡AY CARAMBA!: E-MAILING WITH THE ALIAS

Context

This activity was used with a second quarter Spanish class at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Description

One of the things I like to have happen in my classroom is interaction. I am a great believer in comprehensible linguistic input. This is always accomplished by the students conversing with each other or with me in class. However, I wanted to achieve this with the students' writing. The opportunity came when UC Santa Barbara offered free e-mail accounts to undergraduates. I immediately had all my students get e-mail accounts.

Luckily, one of my students worked for one of the Internet providers at UC Santa Barbara. What he did was create an alias named "caramba." This alias was an e-mail address that, when sent a message, the message would forward to all my students and me. The original purpose of the alias "caramba" was for use in an assignment in which I would post fictitious ads to the alias. I would send three ads at one time (e.g., ads for concert tickets, animals up for adoption, job openings). I would try to keep the context of the ads within the spectrum of my students' interest.

The students' assignment would be to answer one of the ads by sending their response directly to me. Their responses were to be 10 sentences long. Should they make any grammatical mistakes, I would make corrections via my e-mail account. I would then send it back to the student. After he made his corrections, he would send it to the alias "caramba" for all the other students to see. The reason I have the students send their revised responses to "caramba" is for the others to see the variety and creativity of responses.

Perhaps some might wonder if the students would cheat since they do this outside my presence. I am glad to report that there were no indications of cheating. I believe if a student wants to learn a second language, the student will not cheat.

Another purpose "caramba" served was to communicate with my students via e-mail. If I had any important announcements such as homework assignments, I could communicate them to the students through "caramba." I also encouraged students to treat "caramba" like a discussion list. If they had any questions about Spanish, they could send a message to "caramba." Either I would answer it, or if another student felt that he knew the answer, he would help.

Evaluation

The use of the alias "caramba" opened another channel of communication for me and my students. My students, for the most part, enjoyed this newfound technology. They found it to be stimulating and motivating. However, one drawback was the inability to put accent marks over vowels, which is not possible over e-mail. Instead they would put apostrophes after the accented vowel (e.g., *águila* = `a'guila`). In closing, I would like to comment that I believe that e-mail will be the future for writing assignments.

Contributor

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LANGUAGE LEARNING VIA E-MAIL IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Context

The e-mail activity described below was used successfully in a second semester Japanese language class at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo using the Pine e-mail system and ASCII for romanized Japanese.

Description

In Spring 1994, a class of 17 students was instructed on the use of e-mail for one-to-one exchanges and for communication through a special class e-mail discussion list.

Electronic mail served several purposes. Students could submit homework assignments for Japanese 102, and interact with each other in Japanese as part of homework, or interact in English or Japanese when they were on their own. Instructors as well could interact with the students, provide feedback on students' tests, and engage in sharing with students via journals.

In this activity there were 11 assignments in all, consisting of:

(4) journals submitted directly to the instructors,
(2) compositions submitted to the class distribution list (which included all students and the two instructors),
(4) responses to the compositions of classmates submitted to the original poster and with a cc to instructors, and
(1) summary of interaction with students from Japan via telephone.

In addition to these assignments, two students submitted e-mail postings on a tea ceremony lesson they observed as extra credit.

Of the two compositions, the first one entitled Watashi ("Me") was written by the students and received no comments from the instructors on content or grammar. However, in the second composition, Watashi no Kazoku ("My Family"), students first sent in their draft to the instructor for comments on content and grammar. The instructor then forwarded back the composition with comments and notes. Students then revised it and sent it back to the instructor for final approval before sending their work to the class list. This process of checking and revising was not done in the other non-e-mail section of Japanese 102.

In both sections, homework accounted for 15% of the total grade. Assignments were similar to those in the other sections of Japanese 102 except for these differences:

- students in the e-mail section could vote on their assignment deadlines whereas the regular section had a set weekly deadline;

- students could read and respond to the compositions of other classmates whereas the regular section could not;
- and the written work of students in the regular section sometimes received overt error correction.

The purpose of having students vote on their assignment deadlines was two-fold. Students needed to feel in control of their homework assignments, especially since they had to find the extra time to go to the university PC lab to do them. Also, students needed an incentive to log on and check their mail regularly. In neither section were students penalized for handing in assignments late.

The instructor chose several model essays taken from the written portion of weekly tests to share with the class. Names and places were changed to make essays anonymous. Students could also e-mail instructors directly to ask for feedback on their compositions in their weekly quizzes as well as ask for make-up work. The instructor sent several of her journal entries to the entire list. Several students took it upon themselves to reply and comment.

Evaluation

INTERACTION

The most obvious benefit from using e-mail even at a beginners' level is that student interaction could be fostered. In a class where time for student-to-student interaction is limited, e-mail allows students to get to know people they would not normally have time to talk to.

As an example, students in this section came mainly from two sections of Japanese 101 in the previous semester. From the first day of class, students sat with people they knew from the previous semester and interacted only with those people.

Even with their second homework assignment to respond to three classmates' compositions entitled, "Me," such interactional patterns did not change; students responded only to people they knew from the previous semester (and it's probably true that they did not get to know even those people during the previous semester). However, in the third assignment the instructor told students to again respond to the composition of three other students, but that those three had to be someone they never spoke to before. This prompted students to get to know students who were sitting on the other side of the classroom and who were from a different section of Japanese by asking more questions.

```
Date:    Tue, 7 Feb 1995 15:40:37 -1000
From:    DW
To:      DS
Cc:      LK Subject: Re: Shukudai #3 A

S-san,

Hajimemashite! Kochira wa W desu!
Kurasu ni, anata wa dare desu ka? Watashi wa anata o shirimasen. Anata
wa doko e suwarimasuka? Soshite; Sumimasen, watashi no sakubun wa myo na
```

```
(strange) desu. Watashi wa tsukare-hatete imashita. Ima, tsukarete
imasu....
Sayonara!

-- W
```

Translation:
S,
Nice to meet you. This is W. Who are you in class? I don't know you. Where do you sit? And... I'm sorry my composition is strange. I was bone tired. I am tired now. Bye!
—W

Although instructors strived to use paired activities and small group activities in their lessons, time was always a limiting factor. Even in such a small class where interaction is stressed, students did not have genuine opportunities to get to know each other, much less to interact in their target language. Therefore, electronic mail helped to increase person-to-person interaction in the target language.

Even students agree. More than half stated that they could interact more with their classmates via e-mail compared to a traditional class.

JAPANESE IN ASCII VS. AUTHENTIC ORTHOGRAPHY

In a survey, students (N=11) expressed concern that they weren't being exposed to real Japanese when they read messages in roomaji from their classmates. However, these students were actually exposed to more Japanese than their counterparts in the regular section since they were required to read messages from their classmates.

These students using e-mail also produced more language. In both the e-mail and non-e-mail sections, students tended to respond in one word answers to the teacher's comments and questions, but with the e-mail section students were able to respond to each other, writing more than a paragraph or two. More than one-third said that they put more effort into writing their messages since they knew their classmates would be reading those messages. One-third also said that they paid more attention to what they wanted to say when writing. Perhaps an adverse effect of this is that a few students were so concerned about conveying their message that they insisted on including English equivalents with their Japanese message.

Students mentioned that they preferred to write out their assignments so they could practice their use of Kana and Kanji. A few even suggested that Japanese word processing be introduced and used with e-mail.

Doing e-mail via Japanese word processing is definitely desirable; however, if students were to be introduced to Japanese word processing, this would require more time to teach students to type accurately in romanized Japanese and also to teach them when to change Kana into Kanji. They would also have to be able to recognize the correct Kanji as they type. Although this is a valuable skill that all students should learn, it might be too difficult for first-year students, not to mention our apparent lack of computer hardware and Japanese word processing software.

What students did not know is that they would still have to type in their Japanese in romanized spelling even if they were to use a word processing program. Therefore, although using Japanese in romanized form is not ultimately the preferred mode of communication, it is a necessary step that students have to go through if they eventually want to use Japanese word processing software.

WRITING VS. SPEAKING

More than half who responded in a class survey said that they preferred writing to speaking since it gave them the practice to think through patterns and to recall vocabulary.

> "[W]hen writing on the computer, you can pause every now and then which is not as challenging as speaking Japanese."
>
> "[W]ith writing one can always go at a slower pace and look up vocabulary and structures which fit [what] one wants to say. Speaking is spontaneous and much practice and knowledge must be acquired to be effective...."

INSTRUCTOR'S REFLECTIONS

More than half of the students in the e-mail section said that they felt comfortable writing in Japanese and that they take less time to write now. Half of respondents felt that they can now say more in Japanese now.

From reading my students' messages, from observing them as they read and write e-mail in our university PC lab (which I had to share along with them), and from survey results, I learned that students do not always look forward to reading messages from their teacher. They would rather skip on over to messages they received directly from their classmates. Less than one-half responded that they look forward to reading messages from their teacher while a full two-thirds looked forward to reading and responding to messages from their classmates. Therefore, if I had to do this project again, I would limit the number of messages that I send out to students.

I also observed that students had a difficult time deciphering homework assignments and other notices that were written in Japanese. Therefore, I would also suggest that homework assignments be given out in class or, if given out via e-mail, at least be in the student's source language (English).

From observing my students, I learned that writing is a recursive process even for my students. Often students would read and write their e-mail messages with a dictionary, their textbook, or with notes on hand to flip through to find old patterns or vocabulary that they had learned previously. Some students used this writing opportunity to use the grammatical patterns that they were learning that week. Others relied on their classmates, asking for meaning of words and expressions.

I found that this sort of practice was especially beneficial since our curriculum and course pace does not allow for frequent reviews or even homework assignments which are necessary to solidify language that is learned. I also saw that students were more than willing to help each other out and actually suggest reading and writing strategies to each other.

Next time I need to pay attention to the technical difficulties as well as psychological difficulties that students may face in using electronic mail. I would suggest that other teachers definitely hold a follow-up to the orientation session to make sure that students know how to deal with too much mail.

Finally, considering the amount of junk mail, irrelevant postings, chain letters, and flaming that went on alongside homework during the course of the semester, I would also stress the basic rules of netiquette. Receiving such junk mail must have contributed to one-third of the class saying that they did not look forward to reading mail from their classmates.

OUTCOMES

There were several outcomes from this experiment. First of all, the success of this e-mail project prompted me to start the GAKUSEI Lists, which allow my students to write in Japanese to other students around the world (see "The GAKUSEI lists. E-mail Discussion Lists for Students of Japanese" in Part 2 of this volume). Secondly, a computer and e-mail use policy, though rudimentary, has been initiated in our school's PC Lab to ensure that students who use e-mail for class work will have priority over those using e-mail for recreational purposes. Finally, I will be able to get Japanese wordprocessing software installed for both instructors and students to use for regular word processing as well as for sending electronic mail in Japanese orthography.

Contributor

Laura Kimoto has taught Japanese at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo for the past six years. She is also the founder and owner of the GAKUSEI Lists which are discussion lists for students of Japanese to communicate with each other world-wide.

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SPANISH MUSIC THROUGH THE INTERNET

Context

This activity is designed to provide 3rd-year university Spanish students with written practice outside the classroom using the Internet.

Description

In this activity, I first set up an e-mail discussion list for my class, and introduced several activities so that students could become comfortable with sending e-mail messages to the group. This included sending several assignments to the list and making sure that every student responded to them.

Then, each student was lent a copy of a tape of Spanish-language music, with the same number of songs as there were students in the class. The songs were from different geographical regions and represented a wide variety of music and styles.

Students were assigned to listen to the tape and choose a song to work with. Students listened to their song outside class and tried to transcribe it. When they had a few lines transcribed, they sent it to the e-mail discussion list together with any questions or difficulties they might have had. The students, who all had access to each other's songs, were encouraged to respond to their classmates with comments, suggestions, and help.

I also wrote to the list as needed to provide supplemental information, vocabulary, suggestions, and ideas. In addition, I sent each individual a private message with corrections and assistance for his or her personal project.

Through several e-mail messages every student was able to transcribe and edit their song-project. Once all the songs were transcribed, they were sent to the list so that the whole class could view the final result.

Evaluation

This project provided the student with a new communication tool. The students freely shared their ideas to an entire group of individuals and got feedback, suggestions, and support in the privacy of their computer. The students worked during their free time, at their own pace. Spanish was no longer a subject restricted to the classroom sphere, but rather a vehicle for interesting communication and interaction outside of class.

After the activity, some of the students' comments were as follows:

> "The most interesting thing about this project was being able to use the Internet, conversing with others outside the classroom."
>
> "I enjoyed this project a lot. I started sufficiently early so that gave me a chance to really put the effort into it. Also, being that it was on e-mail, I really got the chance to learn how to use it."

> "Unique and interesting way for us to be exposed to the Spanish culture, improve our listening and writing skills, to work as a group."

> "As group projects go, this is one of the better ones that I have seen. Also, I am sure some people who have never used e-mail before now have learned that skill."

In the future I would like to add the new students to the same e-mail discussion list, so that the students from previous years can preserve this link to be able to continue practicing Spanish. This way the new students will benefit from suggestions and advice of more experienced students on the use of the Internet, and the former students will have a tool to continue practicing Spanish and broadening their relations with other students interested in the Spanish language and culture.

Contributor

Marta González-Lloret is a Spanish instructor in the European Languages and Literature Department at the University of Hawai'i. She is very interested in uses of the Internet for second language instruction, and she regularly "surfs" the net from Hawai'i.

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THE COLLABORATIVE FAIRY TALE

Context

This activity was used with a fourth semester German Conversation and Composition class but is applicable to other languages at the intermediate level and above.

Description

After reading and discussing a German fairy tale with students and talking about the characteristics of fairy tales in general (e.g., the victory of good over evil, magical objects and events, typical beginnings and endings), the class was assigned to create a fairy tale collaboratively via e-mail. This was to be done individually outside class time, and for this purpose the students received an alphabetical list of the e-mail addresses of their classmates.

I began the fairy tale with the partial sentence (in German): "Once upon a time, there was a little girl who...", and sent this to the first person on the alphabetical list. Each student was required to add at least one sentence to the fairy tale and then to forward the story on to the next person on the list. (Forwarding allows the text to be edited before it is sent again.) Each successive recipient was responsible for correcting any mistakes she or he found in the text received. I could determine how much addition and correction any one student did by instructing them to send a carbon copy to my e-mail address upon forwarding to the next student. Although the students were familiarized with using electronic mail before this project was implemented, in order to aid the students with the technological part of the project, I included explicit instructions on how to forward a message, and how to send a copy before the actual fairy tale text. The students whose names appeared at the end of the list were told how important their contributions would be in bringing the fairy tale toward a logical conclusion, and I urged them to bear this in mind when adding to the text.

Following the final submission, the text was then edited by the class as a whole using an overhead LCD panel in a technology classroom. (An overhead transparency of the fairy tale will work, too.) The completed and corrected version was distributed electronically to all class members and was subsequently read aloud in class.

Evaluation

The creation of a collective fairy tale stimulated a high level of enthusiasm and motivation among students. Pre-class chatter often focussed on the class fairy tale, and very often I heard the question: "Who has the fairy tale?" Those who had not yet received it were both curious about its content and eager to contribute to the storyline, and those who had already contributed were interested in how the story had changed since their own additions.

Despite the pressure upon students by their peers to keep the story moving from person to person, it is advisable to also create a plan requiring students to respond within a reasonable amount of time. One student not responding can result in disaster. For this reason, the teacher's copy of each subsequent change can be used to track the progress of the story and bypass students who do not respond within a reasonable time period. Also, making sure that the students have had the opportunity to practice using electronic mail before beginning this project eliminates some of the technical obstacles that might otherwise be encountered.

Contributor

Christine Manteghi is a graduate student and teaching assistant at Penn State University. She received her M.A. in German at PSU in 1994 and is currently pursuing her doctorate.

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ESPAÑOL CON TECHNOLOGÍA: E-MAIL IN BEGINNING SPANISH CLASSES

Context

Although the major focus of Beginning Spanish I is the enhancement of students' Spanish-language proficiency, at the same time an increase in the students' overall technological proficiency was sought. For this project one goal could not be accomplished without the other. Before e-mail could used as a tool for increasing Spanish-language proficiency, the basics of electronic communication had to be taught. From the beginning of the class, interaction in the target language via e-mail was the main goal. In addition, activities were designed to encourage and help students to perfect the skills necessary to use e-mail as an effective communication conduit.

Description

Early in the semester, all classes met in a campus computer lab for instruction about how to use the e-mail program. Afterwards they were given the choice of using the lab or completing the assignments from home via modem.

At the beginning, many students did not like this extra e-mail requirement for the course. (I discovered this by having the students answer a very short questionnaire about how they felt about using e-mail.) I reassured them that the time in the computer lab would be equivalent to the amount of time that they would have to spend in the library for another class. In addition to questions about their Spanish assignments, I encouraged them to write me via e-mail if they had any questions about the technology that many were using for the first time.

Three different kinds of assignments were distributed to students every Saturday. All assignments were to be completed by the following Saturday at midnight. The assignments consisted of the following:

- A Cooperative E-mail Partner Assignment — an interactive exercise from the textbook that would be completed outside of class via e-mail. For example, if the exercise were about what students did last weekend, they would interact with each other by sending their individual responses to each others' questions via e-mail. Sometimes students were required to interview each other by telephone as well. When they had completed their discussion by e-mail or telephone interviews, they would forward a final draft of their efforts to me via e-mail for my consideration.
- An Individual E-mail Assignment using the supplemental videos which accompanied the course's textbook. After viewing the video in class, a follow-up assignment is sent via e-mail. Questions about characters, plot, and vocabulary expansion are easily distributed via a class e-mail list. Each student then e-mails back his or her individual responses. Instead of correcting each student contribution individually, I note the most important errors at the beginning of the next class.
- A Summary of the Short Paragraphs in Spanish published over the Internet on *Edupage* — *Edupage* consists of very topical news in separate paragraphs about how technology is being used to improve opportunities in education and business. I ask students to choose

one of the short paragraphs for their weekly assignment. They send a copy of the original paragraph, the paragraph re-stated in their own Spanish words, and their personal lexicon (words in Spanish and English that they had to look up). To subscribe to Edupage in Spanish, send a message to: *edunews@nc-rj.rnp.br*. In the message field simply ask to be added to the distribution list.

Evaluation

In a manner of speaking, electronic communication is the great equalizer. No one has to be the dominant class figure. Success is determined not by one's boldness in the classroom, but more by one's current ability level. Students are able to meet outside the class via this technology. This project seems to bring more of a sense of reality to students' communicative endeavors than those that take place in the classroom alone. Perhaps a unique aspect of this project has been that my students feel that I am always available to them for questions about Spanish beyond the classroom and outside of my office hours.

Furthermore, I have a deep-seated interest in preparing my students not only as communicative Spanish speakers, but as individuals who are able to use technology for improving their future lives. It is my hope that from this beginning my students will choose to communicate with people throughout the world, and that sometimes they will carry out this communication in Spanish.

Contributor

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USING AN ON-CAMPUS E-MAIL LIST TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

Context

The project described below is a closed mailing list discussion group. The length of the project was one semester. All of the participants were students at Chubu University in Kasugai, Japan. Approximately half of the students had previous experience using e-mail in an earlier project (see "A Virtually Motivating Experience" in Part 2 of this volume). The format of this project is appropriate for elementary and intermediate level users of any foreign or second language.

Description

The project involved 79 students of English at Chubu University. The majority of the students were from two International Studies Department English classes; 35 from a 1st-year class and 20 from a 2nd-year class. The other students were individual volunteers drawn from second year International Studies Department English classes and from a group who had spent the previous semester studying at Ohio University. The latter group came from a variety of majors and academic years. In addition to the students, eight instructors participated in the project.

Participation was required for the first two groups mentioned above. However, the quality and quantity of students' contributions to the list didn't affect their grades. As mentioned above, participation by the other students was voluntary.

The students' first assignment was to post a self-introduction to the list. After reading the initial postings, the students began to respond to one another. These early postings were not very long and contained little detail, so the participating instructors began to respond to the students and prompt them to expand their ideas and further explore certain topics.

This led to an interesting development. The students began to direct explanations of their earlier postings and questions to individual instructors.

In some ways this development was quite useful. The students' curiosity about the instructors' opinions and experiences motivated them to pursue topics in greater detail. The topics included life in foreign countries, how to study English, entertainment, part-time jobs, love, and non-Japanese perceptions of Japan. The instructors then turned the questions back on the students. This pushed the students to write longer and more meaningful messages.

Evaluation

The most positive aspect of the project was the students who found that they could communicate using English even if their skills were not so strong. As seen in the table below, the students didn't feel that their English improved much as a result of participating in this project, but they felt a stronger motivation to improve their English and communicate their thoughts more clearly.

In addition, one class experienced a side benefit: the classroom atmosphere improved because of the exchange of views and information on the mailing list. Some students commented that even though they were physically in the same class, they only came to have a good understanding of their classmates through e-mail. At the end of the semester, the students completed a questionnaire and rated the project in a number of areas. Seventy-five of the 79 students responded to the questionnaire. The results are shown below.

Students were also asked to make additional comments on the project. The comments were a bit mixed. The students who frequently read and posted to the list had positive reactions and those who didn't participate regularly gave a variety of reasons, including lack of time and difficulty in using the computer. An extreme example of the positive reactions of the former group can be seen in the following comment:

> "I am full of my life!!! One of the reasons is 'e-mail'... Through e-mail, I could get acquainted with various people. I am happy!!!"

How would you rate participating in the e-mail list
1 (poor) — 5 (excellent) in terms of the following?

	1	2	3	4	5
learning to use the computer	13.3%	16.0%	32.0%	22.7%	16.0%
learning to type	11.0%	21.9%	38.4%	19.2%	9.6%
improving English writing skills	9.7%	26.4%	47.2%	13.9%	2.8%
improving English reading skills	8.2%	21.9%	46.6%	21.9%	1.4%
developing new friendships	43.8%	19.2%	26.0%	11.0%	0.0%
learning about lives and opinions of other list members	19.2%	28.8%	34.2%	16.4%	1.4%
learning about foreign countries and cultures	35.6%	19.2%	23.3%	16.4%	5.5%
increasing your interest in English	11.0%	19.2%	32.9%	24.7%	12.3%

Contributors

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THE FRENCH CONNECTION: PUBLIC JOURNALS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Context

Using a networked computer system, students in high school French IV create entries for public journals. Similar activities could be carried out with students of other languages.

Description

Journals and learning logs are an integral part of my high school classes from French I through Advanced Placement French. However, there are practical and pedagogical limitations to having the teacher solely responsible for responding to all journal entries. Computer networking now allows me to assign journal-writing to my students with the rest of the class as audience.

I confront students with thought-provoking questions which I want them to respond to on "The French Connection", a local bulletin board conference for my two French IV classes. I am quite explicit in telling my students that their audience is the entire French IV contingent and that they should be much more aware of their peers than of me. Students are given a topic or question with four to seven days to reply. During this period of time, I monitor the entries and make sure that everyone has responded.

At the end of the period, students are given several related assignments. The first is to scan the other entries and choose one to respond to. I then ask students to read 8–12 of the entries (responses to the question or each other's responses). This background knowledge forms the basis for an oral class discussion or debate on the topic at hand.

We often take topics from current events and school issues which students are particularly interested in. At times, they offer suggestions via "The French Connection." One of our early issues produced a fiery debate. A letter to parents from the principal about minors' leisure time alcohol consumption raised the wrath of many a student and seemed an ideal topic. I gave the students a copy of the letter, telling them they had a week to enter their thoughts about the letter. They could use the computer lab during a free period, lunch, or after school, or they could use their home computer if they had a modem. Students wrote at length about the role of parents, the community, the government, the school, and minors in dealing with this important issue.

The students read others' entries with keen interest, and the resulting classroom discussion was based on deep reflection and material gathered from numerous entries. We saved the messages on the conference and referred to them several months later. We turned to them again following the death of a recent graduate and twenty other people in a throng of New Year's Eve revelers. When the local Hong Kong newspapers reported the incident and started investigating teenage drinking, the students wanted to look at their previous work, and some of their attitudes and reasoning changed during an ensuing discussion.

Topics that most closely affect the students have the greatest success, such as materialism in Hong Kong, senior privileges, allowances, a new school schedule, the school's ban on smoking, student government elections, the quality of the cafeteria food, or the lack of cleanliness around the campus.

While the students carry the bulk of the discussion, I do intervene at a certain stage, responding to the entries after their peers have done so. I do not grade entries; rather, I focus on content and respond with questions and thoughts to encourage the writer to probe deeper. Samples of students' public journals become part of their French assessment portfolio.

Sometimes I use the bulletin board for structural activities as well. When we were studying the subjunctive mood in French IV, I typed twenty incomplete sentences into "The French Connection." The fragments referred to *Le Petit Prince* and had to be completed in the subjunctive or the indicative. After the students completed the sentences during a class session in the computer lab, I printed out all of the work, and each student received the work of another student. The recipient was not to edit but was only to indicate where a possible mistake had occurred. The original student received the printout and, during free time, returned to the computer to make changes and corrections. As students had access to all entries, if they were stumped, they could read other students' work (though of course, this still did not necessarily give them the right answers). A former Spanish colleague does similar grammatical and vocabulary exercises, but he often lets the students create them and do the input themselves.

Evaluation

The following student comments are illustrative of the value of "The French Connection":

> "Since I know that other French students will be reading it, I put more thought into it as not to appear sounding 'unintelligent.'"
>
> "I know that more advanced people could be reading my stuff, and I am comfortable with it, knowing they can help me as well as the teacher."
>
> "When I'm writing in pen, there's no audience except for the teacher, but in the BBS [bulletin board system] there's an audience — it's weird. I concentrate more."
>
> "I'm *much* more aware of an audience. I feel like I'm writing it all for someone else."

As one student put it, "It's like a public journal." In addressing a wider audience than the teacher, the bulletin board system forces students to take more care than when I am the sole audience. While computer journal writing remains first draft writing, when it goes public via "The French Connection", it also has a sense of being published and on display.

Contributor

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COMPUTER CONFERENCING AS A TOOL FOR AUGMENTING STUDENT INTERACTION AND COLLABORATION

Context

The following activities were all used in university French classes. They can be adapted to intermediate or advanced classes of any language.

Description

In my French classes at the University of Guelph, I've used a conferencing system which consists of an electronic bulletin board where students can post messages. It is similar to a USENET newsgroup, except that it can be accessed only by the students and teacher in one particular class.

The following case studies illustrate the use of computer conferencing to promote collaborative, cooperative, and learner-centered pedagogy — shifting the role of the teacher from "sage on the stage" to facilitator or guide and encouraging student interaction.

In each of the three examples, the normal course work had as a component student participation in a computer conference. Bulletin boards were set up for each class and divided into several appropriate topics such as instructions, assignments and free discussion.

CASE 1

The first case was a 4-hour second semester introductory survey of French literature and literary history course. A 2-hour block of this course consisted of very traditional lecture hours; a 3rd hour of fairly traditional small group seminar work; and cooperative assignments took over the 4th hour where groups of three to five students reported to the class on some original aspect of the lectures illustrated by slides, overheads and video.

Conferencing-based tasks were designed to foster cooperation within groups of students and to produce student-authored learning materials for the rest of the class. Two groups of two to four students were assigned as official note-takers for each block of lectures. The double version evolved as a way of compensating for information gaps; collaborative authoring within each group also significantly reduced the number of grammar errors. The groups met right after class, put together their notes, and sent the resultant summary to the instructor via e-mail. The instructor then corrected whatever grammar mistakes remained, removed any flagrant errors of fact, and posted the summaries to the appropriate topic in the class conference.

In addition to summarizing ideas, the groups were required to identify and list key words in each report. Students knew that the final exam would be based in large part on those key words. This validated the exercise, and provided as well a review medium for the course. The exam also became a collaborative effort between the students and the instructor. This particular activity was highly appreciated by the vast majority of the students. The small minority's concerns dealt with issues such as technological problems and access to computers.

The second conferencing task was a free discussion on the bulletin board of the ideas presented during lectures and seminars. Only a few students participated — those whose language control was the best. I have since eliminated this task as it proved to be too intimidating.

CASE 2

This case included 23 students in a 6-week intensive English course on Albert Camus. The course began with traditional lecture-based sessions on theory and background (two weeks); the remaining four weeks consisted of group reports analyzing and comparing the required works with optional works. In this way, readings were manageable — any one group only had to read the core list plus a limited number of optional readings, but the entire class profited from the group reports dealing with other optional readings. Since questions dealing with all readings would appear on the exam, the groups were listened to with attention.

Discussion topics were available on the computer conference, as in Case 1. Unlike the second-semester group, however, the advanced students discussed with a will, querying each other, and applying personal experiences to issues. They generated over 400 messages directly related to course content, plus about 50 more under a "just-for-chat" topic. The electronic discussion continued after the last class, beyond the exam, and well into the following semester. Some of the skills honed in the process, aside from language-based ones, included agreeing or disagreeing with peers, refining statements when challenged, and appreciating and integrating differing points of view. As noted by many researchers, computer-mediated communication (CMC) by its nature tends to be inclusive — students who for reasons of personality or level of language command could not participate in class had the chance, and took it, to express themselves electronically.

CASE 3

The third case included 32 students enrolled in a fourth year applied linguistics course on the French language in Canada. The pedagogical core of the course was built around independent research done in groups on topics not covered by initial lectures. Each group had to produce a report to be sent first via e-mail to the instructor, who responded by critiquing the report online for grammar and content, and returning the marked-up text for corrections by the authoring group. The final version was then posted to the class conference as a position paper for in-class and e-mail discussion. Topics assigned to each position paper were heavily used.

Evaluation

As a primary effect, activities involving CMC shift the instructor's position from that of teacher as authoritative source for a passive learning group to that of a facilitator who designs research and learning experiences and listens to the resultant exchange of ideas. It has been, and continues to be, an exhilarating experience. It also has been, and continues to be, a great deal more work than the traditional format and a roller-coaster ride in terms of student reaction. The best students loved the experience and wanted more; the worst resented the experience and felt they had not been "taught" properly. My evaluations were illuminating: when I taught the same course in a fairly traditional manner, I was judged to be an excellent teacher, but not very open to the viewpoints of students; when I taught the courses in a more learner-centered format, I was judged to be very open to the viewpoints of students, but only an adequate teacher.

Students initially show a strong resistance to the shift from passive to collaborative learning, partly due to the unfamiliarity of the model, and partly due to an inability to credit their own and their peers' autonomous learning capacities without direct validation from an authority figure such as the instructor. It may be true that in communicative language teaching, students are generally quite open to in-class cooperative activities. But face-to-face communicative activities often take place in pairs or small groups, where the students' language is beyond scrutiny. Computer conferencing can be a particularly challenging sort of cooperative learning, since students' ideas and language are posted for all to see.

This perhaps explains why in my experience I've found that with less-advanced students only some CMC activities work well — those which are highly structured and which reduce the level of personal responsibility to a tolerable level. Students at advanced levels, however, given clear parameters, prefer the free-for-all discussion to the structured assignment, especially when evaluation of content is clearly defined as independent of language accuracy.

Contributor

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A COMPUTER NETWORK FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Context

A computer network was created to support the learning experiences of 30 student-teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at the Faculty of Education in a large Canadian university in Ontario. These student-teachers were preparing to become French as a second language teachers (FSL) in elementary and secondary schools; they were enrolled in a university credit course focusing on FSL teaching methodology which included 3-hour weekly seminars and a teaching practicum.

Description

A computer network was integrated into a French as a second language teaching methodology course for 26 weeks. The computer network, named "FSLnet", was established using a mainframe computer and a conferencing system called COSY. The network linked the 30 student-teachers enrolled in the course, the course instructor, an FSL pedagogical assistant, and a technical assistant. The students accessed the network via IBM or Macintosh computers available in computer laboratories located on two campuses of the university.

Computer conferencing activities were implemented as an integral part of the activities for the FSL teaching methodology course. Students were requested to log onto the network once a week, or more often if they wished. They were also required to conduct all communications on the computer network in French. The foci of the electronic interactions were negotiated between the students and the course instructor at the beginning of the course and further defined throughout the implementation of the activity. FSLnet was structured to engage the participants in eight conferences with different purposes. At the beginning of the course, the participants engaged in a conference called "Bienvenue", which provided a context for the students to practice using the conferencing system COSY while introducing themselves to all other members of the computer network. Electronic interactions occurring in a conference called "Le Stage" ("The Teaching Practicum") focused on issues related to the students' teaching experiences in the practicum schools where they had been placed to practice teaching one day a week. They discussed such topics, for example, as classroom discipline, the teaching of French culture, and student motivation.

A conference called "Tech" provided a space where the network participants could seek and obtain technical advice whenever they experienced difficulties using COSY. A conference called "Cafe" offered students a space on the network where they could "drop by and chat" about their personal lives as they might in a coffee house. A conference called "Notre Français" ("Our French") focused on linguistic difficulties that the students experienced in their use of French. In the conference "Info" the network participants exchanged information concerning professional, social and cultural events held in various communities which were of relevance to the group.

In the conference "Nos Lectures" ("Our Readings") the computer network participants discussed readings (on topics such as the evaluation of FSL speaking skills) that they completed as part of the course. "Les Ordinateurs" ("Computers") was a conference held in the last weeks of the course in order to help the students reflect upon their personal experiences using a computer network and discuss applications of this technology to FSL programs in school contexts. All eight conferences were public, asynchronous exchanges among the participants. In addition, the student-teachers had access to e-mail, which afforded them the possibility to interact with anyone with an e-mail address, be they a member of FSLnet or not. The student-teachers could also participate in "ED Forum", a separate conference which linked them with other students enrolled in the Faculty of Education to discuss general educational issues common to teaching various disciplines.

Evaluation

A case study documented the student-teachers' experiences of participating in the computer network and their perceptions of the contributions which the conferencing activities had made to their learning experiences over 26 weeks. This research (Sanaoui, forthcoming) indicated that the computer networking activities had contributed to the student-teachers' development in three ways. First, the students reported that the conferencing activities had helped them improve their writing skills in French (especially grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure) and heightened their level of confidence using French orally in face-to-face interactions with their peers during the weekly course seminars.

Second, all students stressed the value of the computer networking activities for developing their knowledge about technology. Students who were anxious about using computers prior to this course reported that they had overcome their fear of computers. Students who felt comfortable using computers indicated that their participation to the network had been a catalyst for self-directed development of their computer skills and learning about other aspects of technology. All students reported that they had gained knowledge about the applications of conferencing to second language education in schools. Furthermore, they indicated that they had acquired much more positive attitudes towards and greater interest in the use of technology, not only for its relevance to FSL teaching and learning, but for educating children in schools, in general.

Third, there was strong consensus among the student-teachers that the computer networking activities had contributed greatly to developing their knowledge about FSL teaching and learning. Students reported that the electronic interactions promoted growth in their theoretical knowledge of FSL teaching (e.g., broadening their personal conceptualizations of the teaching of French culture) as well as their practical knowledge (e.g., developing personal portfolios of teaching strategies, learning activities, resource materials, and lesson plans for teaching children at various grade levels).

Reference

Sanaoui, R. (forthcoming). Case study of a computer network supporting the preparation of French as a second language teachers. In S. Lapkin (Ed.), *French as a second language in Canada: Recent empirical studies*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

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THE CLASS NEWSGROUP AS TEXTBOOK

Context

This activity was used in an advanced Business French course. It would be equally effective in other intermediate and advanced courses that focus on language for specific purposes.

Description

Students studying business language need to acquire not only the specific language and culture of the business world but also more general knowledge of the society in which business is conducted. Ideally, the latter would be acquired in other culture and civilization courses taken before the business language course, but this is often not possible. Using a course newsgroup to publish a student-created textbook explaining certain aspects of the target culture provides an opportunity for students to acquire needed background information and share it with others while class time is devoted to the specific content of the course.

Students create their text during the first half of the semester in addition to their regular class assignments. From a list of cultural topics relevant to the business world (e.g., governmental organization, unions, communications, and education), the students choose the subjects of their research. Since this is intended as individual work, each student has a different topic. (It would, of course, be possible to use this as a small-group activity as well.) Students are told to produce short (five to six pages) reports about their topics intended to answer the questions of entrepreneurs contemplating doing business in France. Rather than write a general outline of, for example, French foreign policy, they are expected to focus on the aspects of their topics that directly affect the business world.

Students submit their papers electronically to a course newsgroup created to serve as the electronic textbook. Course newsgroups at Case Western Reserve University are created at the request of faculty members and are identical to USENET groups. However, they are not distributed off campus. In this case, the newsgroup is moderated by the professor so that only papers in their final form will be seen by the other students. Suggested corrections and revisions are made electronically and sent back to the student with the original report. This process continues until the language used is correct and the content meets the objective of the activity — to help business people acquire necessary cultural knowledge. When all the reports are completed and posted, a student-created, business-specific cultural reader is available to all. In subsequent exams and projects, all students are responsible for the information in this "textbook."

Evaluation

This activity proved to be a very effective way of building the students' abilities to comprehend and write about cultural topics. It also helped them focus on the specific needs of the business world. Although the same activity can be done by making students responsible for oral reports in the classroom, the electronic text has a number of advantages. First of all, there is never the problem of students who miss their assigned days, who make so many errors that their information is not understood, or who miss days when other reports are given. When the electronic text is created, the error correction is private and in successive drafts students can focus on both language and content. Secondly, this activity not only solves some of the problems inherent in the use of student oral reports, it also eliminates the need for the teacher to provide cultural background through lectures and handouts. Class time can be used for more interactive, task-based activities. Finally, when all the "chapters" have been posted, students have constant access to the information and can use it to complete other assignments and projects.

When this activity was tested, only electronic mail and newsgroups were available throughout the campus. Now that the World Wide Web is accessible to everyone on campus, one might require that the "chapters" be produced as WWW pages. Then part of the students' assignment would be to include links to relevant information in their reports. The faculty member would link the students' productions together through a table of contents page. However, one goal of a business language class is to teach students how to write in the specific formats used by the business world; these formats do not yet include WWW pages. On the other hand, presentation software is fairly common in the business world; students could produce their reports as slide presentations distributed through servers on the campus network.

Contributor

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THE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL: AN EXPERIMENT IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

Context

This activity was organized with college students of advanced French. It is applicable to other languages and levels.

Description

The cadets enrolled in the French Culture and Civilization course at the US Air Force Academy use a combination of newspapers and computers to develop their global awareness, multicultural appreciation, and language skills. Students collaborate with classmates in thought-provoking written dialogues in French on current events via electronic journals. These dialogues focus on news articles found in the *Journal Français d'Amérique* (*JFA*), to which each cadet is required to subscribe. *JFA* is a French newspaper published bimonthly that typically carries information about French current events, their effects on France, and their relationship to events in the United States. Electronic journals are kept throughout the semester, covering four to five issues of *JFA*.

Students are divided into groups of three to four. Upon receiving the first issue of *JFA*, each group elects a Team Chief for the semester who oversees article selection and who is responsible for guiding the written dialogue. After much discussion, each group selects an article of common interest from *JFA*.

Outside of class, each group member must read the selected article and create a reaction file of one or two paragraphs. Cadet reactions are written spontaneously without laborious use of dictionaries or grammar aids. Suggested discussion items include the following:

- Do you agree with the author?
- What did you find most interesting?
- Do you disagree with anything?
- Do you need help understanding anything?

Other group members may, for extra credit, comment on the reaction piece as follows:

- Explain whether you agree or not.
- Comment on things you think are important.
- Seek clarification.
- Point out any serious language problems.

The cadets store their electronic journal entries and comments in dedicated course directories located on the USAFA network. Students comment on the work of their peers using the *Annotation* function of Microsoft Word (6.0).

Following is an example of an electronic journal reaction and a colleague's comment, translated into English; the journal entry is on "Taxe sur les carburants" ("Fuel Tax") *Journal Français d'Amérique*, volume 17, number 4, page 7:

> "After this article, I saw a problem that France and the United States have in common. Fuel taxes are not a problem that is unique to France. Rather, these taxes are a fact of life for most of the world. In this article, it discusses the rising prices of super unleaded 95, of super unleaded 98, and super leaded. This national issue is important to the country whose gasoline is already taxed more than any other country in Europe."
>
> "It is important to realize that taxes are very important to France's economic success. Taxes give the French government the money that it can use to better the country. Problems like unemployment and pollution are important, but they are difficult to resolve without a lot of money. I think that the French government is intelligent and that it will do what it has to do in order to help the country."

The colleague's comment:

> "Your summary is well written. You said something that I hadn't thought of. I had a negative response to the tax and I didn't think that it might be something necessary for the country. Maybe the French can understand that all of their services like long vacations, doctors, and their government programs are very expensive. Thank you for your thoughts."

Evaluation

Students are generally enthusiastic about this assignment. They enjoy selecting and reading articles of their choice and sharing their insights and ideas with other group members. Spring 1995 was the second semester that electronic journals were used in this course. During the first semester (Fall 1994), reactions and comments were mandatory. This semester, however, we required students to write a reaction to each article but allowed them to comment for extra credit only. Students were more motivated to comment during Fall 1994, when they were required to do so. Overall, we found the reactions to be reflective and probing. More comments, however, would have increased the level of reflection while keeping the emphasis on collaboration.

In the future, we plan not only to make the comments mandatory, but also to expand the cadets' horizons beyond *JFA*. Because of the accessibility of timely, authentic French materials on the Internet and the World Wide Web, we plan to encourage cadets to explore the Internet and the Web as well as *JFA*.

Contributors

Lieutenant Colonel Jill Crotty and Major Judith Brisbois are Associate Professors of French in the Department of Foreign Languages, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado. They are continuing a department-wide effort to integrate computers, the Internet, and the World Wide Web into the curriculum.

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SUPPORTING STUDENT WRITING

WRITE FROM THE START!: E-MAIL FOR BEGINNING FRENCH STUDENTS

Context

This activity was carried out with two first-year university French classes — a first semester class of 15 students and a second semester class of 8 students. It was a pilot project which could be easily modified for other levels and other languages.

Description

This pilot project had several goals:

- to introduce students to the Internet (most of them had never used e-mail before);
- to encourage student-instructor interaction and communication, preferably in French (but English was also accepted given the low level of proficiency of first-semester students);
- to encourage peer interaction and communication in order to create a better and more enjoyable classroom atmosphere conducive to learning;
- to expose students to more naturalistic French (Daily News from the French Embassy in Washington); and
- to develop students' reading and writing skills in a low stress environment.

Through the university computing center, I set up an e-mail discussion list for my students. I used this list to forward copies to them of the Daily News in French (for information about receiving the Daily News by Internet, see "Le SMIC Jeune: Gathering Information and Language from Foreign Language Newsgroups" in Part 3 of this volume)

Students were give two optional weekly assignments for which they could receive extra credit. The first was to write a one paragraph mini-composition on a theme I would give them based on the weekly vocabulary. Here are two examples of themes:

> You invited a friend to dinner for his/her birthday. What did you prepare? Where did you go shopping?
>
> Where did you live when you were a child? Describe the house you lived in. What was your favorite room? Why?

The second assignment was to summarize, in French or English, a portion of the Daily News. Students sent the completed assignments to me by e-mail.

I answered all of the messages with positive comments only; I did not correct any mistakes unless students requested a correction or an explanation. The assignments were done on a voluntary basis. Students received extra-credit for their participation, but they were not penalized if they abstained. An average of 85% of the students participated over the course of the semester.

In this pilot project, students were not given any assignments to post messages to the whole list. They did, however, have each other's e-mail addresses and many exchanged messages privately.

Evaluation

This pilot study was very successful for both classes and met all of the goals outlined in the previous section. Students enjoyed the convenience of being able to read and write messages to each other and to their instructor at any time. Writing via e-mail proved to be excellent at reducing the stress and anxiety beginning language learners tend to experience. It eliminated the time pressure as well as the embarrassment of making mistakes in front of the class. It seemed to increase students' self-confidence which in turn allowed them to read and write better as they started to realize they could actually do it.

As students got to know each other better, classroom dynamics and atmosphere improved. Students asked more personal questions to the instructor. One student even started teaching local pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English) to his instructor!

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ACADEMIC ARGUMENT AND E-MAIL DISCUSSION LISTS: BRINGING COLLABORATION AND DEBATE INTO THE WRITING COURSE

Context

University of Washington students in the Research Paper Writing Course for ESL students (English 102A) used an e-mail discussion list to collaborate on their research projects. The students in ENG 102A have advanced levels of English proficiency (500–579 TOEFL) and are enrolled in graduate or undergraduate programs.

Description

In the Spring of 1994, e-mail distribution lists were set up for all Academic English Program (AEP) ESL writing courses at the University of Washington. The discussion list works via an e-mail listserv address which automatically forwards mail it receives to all addresses lists in its program. The result is a class discussion in which everyone can "hear" online what everyone else in the class is "saying" any time of the day.

In the Summer and Fall Quarters of 1994 three instructors of the English 102A Research Paper Writing Course chose to use one of these lists to give students a space for collaborating on their research and writing. After a brief orientation to the form and function of e-mail discussion lists, students from all three class sections were required to submit weekly postings to the list. In these e-mail postings, students introduced their topics, asked for and gave feedback, and read how other students were developing and narrowing their research topics. Their activity on the list was useful for their reading, writing, and argumentation skills, as well as for developing class cohesion.

As students became more familiar with using e-mail via the class lists (which was fun), we then practiced doing research on our library system's databases (which they might have found not so fun) and saving the results to e-mail.

In addition to setting up a space for student interaction, the use of e-mail lists opened up new lines of communication between students and instructors. In terms of classroom management we found e-mail a great way to communicate with students who missed class or who needed a mini writing conference (e.g., here's my thesis statement, what do you think?).

We have been able to assist in ways we never could before. A common situation is that a student panics and decides she must change her topic because she cannot find enough sources. Via online conferencing, we could suggest additional search strategies, often more quickly and conveniently than by phone or in person.

Evaluation

During the Summer of 1994 the e-mail lists were an enormous success. Students used the lists to find others with common research interests, share research resources, generate ideas and lines of argument, and even get direct feedback on topic choices and thesis statements.

The e-mail lists were also a powerful social equalizer. English 102A typically includes the US immigrant with almost native-speaker oral fluency as well as the visiting scholar who struggles to make himself understood, the freshman coming straight from a US high school, and the doctoral student who has already been published in English. Discussion via e-mail gave students the time to comfortably compose themselves in English.

The sense of audience students had while writing on the list also did much to contribute to the quality of their writing. We found that when students wrote to the list, they demonstrated more effective monitoring of their grammar, spelling, and organization than when they wrote to their instructors individually. One student said that he had great difficulty typing anything when sitting down at the computer to write his draft, but that when he summarized arguments or questions for the e-mail list, he had no problem deciding what to write or how to write it.

The focused academic quality of discussion witnessed in the Summer was never reproduced in the Fall. Again in the Fall, as was the case in the Summer, there were multiple sections of English 102A using the same list. However, there was no agreement among the instructors about how the lists should be incorporated into the class. Some instructors required participation; others didn't. Some instructors gave extensive orientations; others let students loose on their own from the very start.

Postings in the Fall were a hodgepodge ranging from general greetings and accounts of how people spent their weekends to complaints about the ESL writing program. Messages often did not refer to any other postings so the discursive element of the list was essentially killed. Frustrated by the trivial content of the postings and the lack of constructive discussion, a few students began an all out flaming war attacking other posters for creating a "sea of superficialities". By the end of the quarter many students were disillusioned and frustrated with e-mail discussion lists. In their evaluation of the e-mail activity, they indicated a desire for more teacher interaction and control of the list as well as more clearly defined assignments and expectations for the project.

Thus, we have come up with the following guidelines to ensure that participation on e-mail lists remains a comfortable and productive activity for students and teachers alike.

- Communicate to the students your goals and expectations as you would with any class activity. We tell students that through the class list they will practice reading and writing arguments which is at the very heart of what this class is about.
- Provide students with orientation to e-mail. Make sure they have the basic knowledge they need to run the software, but more importantly, familiarize them with netiquette, including the dangers of flaming.
- Solicit participation from two or three sections of the course, so that the possibility of feedback from a larger group is an added attraction. The motivation for writing rather than talking about their topics is strengthened because students are then writing for and debating with fellow members of the academic community whom they might never meet otherwise.

In addition to these general guidelines, here are some techniques that one of the instructors of both the Summer and Fall quarters, Bonnie Olsen, has found useful in her classes:

- On the first day questionnaire, have a place for students to write their e-mail address if they have one.
- Have the first homework assignment in class be for each student to get an e-mail address. At the UW students don't have any problem doing this; in fact, some students develop "modem fever" during our courses and start talking to us about buying computers and/or modems for their use at home, so they don't have to go to the library.
- Set precise deadlines for the required postings.
- Do not be afraid as the instructor to be a presence on the list. Sometimes I (Bonnie) might forward an answer to an individual's question that I think may be of interest to everyone. Sometimes I give positive or negative feedback to individuals about what they have written to the group.
- Lastly, do intervene if there is flaming going on, i.e., an attack on a person rather than on his or her argument. The rationale for intervention is to reinforce that arguing appropriately and in an academic fashion is the skill being practiced.

Contributors

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Appendix: Three sample assignments from Bonnie Olsen's class

WEEK 1

`Introduce yourself & your research paper topic to the list by 8am Monday. Respond to someone else's posting by the following Thursday. When you respond, include an informative subject heading (e.g., "Comments on __________________") and either include the message you're responding to or write "I'm replying to the message posted by ____________________ (student's name) on _________ (date)." In your response you can ask a question or make a suggestion.`

WEEK 3

`Remind us of your research topic and tell how you have narrowed it.`

WEEK 4

`Write a recommendation of an information source you've consulted during your research (e.g., a database like ERIC, PsychInfo, or NEXUS).`

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ANONYMOUS PEER REVIEW OF STUDENT ESSAYS ON A LAN

Context

This activity was used in 2nd-year German language courses.

Description

Current views about writing, both in one's native language, and increasingly, in a second or foreign language, emphasize that writing can be viewed as a sort of discovery process or a way for the writer to find out what he or she wants to say. Typically, however, in foreign language courses, student writing is more product-focused; students write for a very limited audience, their instructor, and often for a limited purpose, to demonstrate their grammatical competence.

A locally-networked program, *MacCollaborator*, developed at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has been used for several quarters in second-year German classes. It allows students both to read and to help edit their peers' writing anonymously. Students first type their essays on the computer. This can be done before class if students have access to a computer; they then simply bring in their files on disk on the designated day. Each essay is then sent anonymously and randomly by the program to two other students. In turn, each student receives two essays from fellow students to review.

Upon receiving a paper to critique, two windows are opened on the computer screen. The essay to be reviewed appears in the top window "Text for Comment," and the lower window is used for comments from the reviewer. To make a comment, the reviewer goes to the original text and highlights any word, phrase, or sentence that he or she would like to comment on. A number is then given to this marked-up portion of the text, much like a footnote marker. The reviewer then goes to the "Comment" window to type in a comment, or offer a suggestion or correction on the specific word, sentence, or idea. After all comments and critiques have been completed, the commented text is then sent back electronically by the program to the original author for revision.

With regard to criteria for critiquing essays, we provide students with a handout suggesting general observations and comments in German and English (e.g., "I don't understand this"; "Perhaps you could combine these two sentences"; or "Why do you think this is true?"), as well as three categories for comments: content, organization and style, and form and grammar. For each category several sub-questions are suggested, again in both German and English.

After critiquing essays of two of their peers, students then use the two sets of comments they receive to revise their own essays. For this process, three windows appear on the screen. The top window holds the commented text which contains the words, phrases, or sentences underlined and numbered by the reviewer. The reviewer's comments are found in the middle window, and in the bottom window the editable text appears, i.e., the unmarked original version which can then be revised. The revision process can either be done during the class period or outside of class, and the instructor sets a date for the final versions to be turned in.

Evaluation

One advantage of this type of networked peer review and editing is that the view of writing as a process is supported by built-in editing and revision components: the process of reading other students' work, critiquing it, getting feedback on one's own work, and revising is automated and streamlined. The paper shuffling of passing essays around, keeping track of who's reviewing whose essay, and rewriting, is kept to a minimum. Commenting is also easier because one is not restricted to writing between the lines, as with paper and pencil essays, but can write comments or questions of any length and in a more legible manner, i.e., without the arrows and scribbles that language students have become so familiar with.

A second main advantage is that instructors have automatic records of the first drafts of students' essays, the corrections (or hypercorrections) suggested by other students, and the final versions of each essay. Based on the erroneous suggestions in the peer critiques, instructors can address misconceptions that students may have. In addition, instructors can keep a running list and tabulation of the most common problems in student writing as well as note the progress each individual student is making in written expression.

Our use of the program with second-year German students has shown the advantages of peer review in general. First, the content of essays seems to be improved because students are now writing for a wider audience and have a communicative purpose when they write. Second, we are noticing that students as critics are beginning to focus more on content (coherence, organization, and clarity of ideas), in addition to form (grammatical accuracy, vocabulary and spelling). Student reaction to this collaborative process and writing for a wider audience has also been very favorable.

Contributor

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more…

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The Daedalus Group, Inc.
1106 Clayton Lane #280W
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tel: (512) 459–0637
locke@daedalus.com
http://daedalus.com/

The *Collaborative Word Processor* in the *Aspects* package.
Group Logic
1408 N. Fillmore St., Suite 10
Arlington, VA 22201
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TEACHER-STUDENT WRITING CONFERENCES VIA E-MAIL

Context

This activity was used in an academic research writing class (102A) in the ESL center, at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. It could be adapted and used in any foreign language course which emphasizes writing.

Description

The fact that English is an inherent part of the electronic information network makes it a useful practice tool for English language learners. EFL instructors, who teach in a setting characterized by little or no requirement for the target language in the learners' immediate environment, are exploiting the network for its natural use of English (Gardner, 1992; Jor and Mak, 1993 and 1994; Vilmi, 1994). In ESL situations, where students experience authentic interaction in the target language outside of class on a regular basis, a practical use for e-mail is less obvious. This project explores electronically conducted interactions between students and the instructor, and examines pragmatic uses of the unique features of e-mail as a learning tool.

The final assignment in the ESL writing class is a research paper that examines two sides of a controversial issue. Students are also required to schedule two conferences with the instructor to review drafts of their papers. Finding a topic and forming the initial arguments poses the greatest problem for many students. More so for ESL students who are assigned writing tasks outside their fields of study, merely for the sake of using the target language. In order to facilitate this preliminary stage of writing, the following task was designed.

The students were asked to brainstorm arguments that explored the two sides of their topics, and e-mail them to the instructor. The instructor then gave feedback via e-mail to help narrow the topics and guide students. Students reevaluated their topics with the help of the instructor's comments, and resubmitted them electronically. The hard copies were then brought to class for peer and self evaluation, discussion, and drafting of theses. The task focused on using the electronic medium of communication as a guidance tool as well as a self- and peer-assessment tool. It accomplished the following:

- provided individual attention to students in the vital initial stages of writing while avoiding the difficulty of scheduling additional face-to-face appointments;
- supplied additional insight into the writing process to what is currently possible with the use of portfolios;
- reduced the anxiety associated with face-to-face conferences with the instructor;
- exploited the fact that e-mail is a different medium of communication than oral or written language; this allowed students to evaluate their own work more objectively; and
- provided a chance for peer evaluation of typed, yet not edited, writing samples. In ESL classes, peer evaluation of handwritten work can pose a problem, yet few students type their initial brainstorming ideas. This task aimed to provide such typed samples while preserving their impromptu nature.

Evaluation

The success of this task was sufficient to call for incorporating it into the class on a regular basis. Having received individual attention at the beginning stages of writing, students indicated an increased willingness to invest time in their papers. This individual attention would not have been practical if face-to-face conferences had had to be scheduled. Although the task did not specifically focus on opening a channel between the students and the instructor, students tended to feel more comfortable requesting additional assistance and feedback throughout the rest of the term. In the class evaluation of writing samples students were able to examine the issues of their topics and assess the sufficiency of their supporting arguments. Students also were able to read each other's ideas and provide helpful suggestions. It was also observed that once students received individual guidance via e-mail, their motivation to start the paper seemed to increase. Here are suggestions for similar tasks in the future:

- Homework assigned on e-mail should be assigned for a specific time, in order to give the instructor a chance to read, and if necessary respond to messages before the following class.
- Homework assigned on e-mail should also specify a particular subject heading in order to avoid confusion with other messages from the students in the instructor's inbox.
- Careful planning of due times can avoid any problems with students who do not have e-mail facilities at home.
- Regular interaction via e-mail throughout the term is recommended to get students in the habit of using this medium of communication and checking their e-mail on a regular basis. Students found an added convenience in e-mail as a way to keep up with assignments if they were absent.
- If this task is incorporated into an ESL writing class on a regular basis, students can also be asked to e-mail each other drafts and brainstorming ideas in order to elicit peer assistance outside of class.

E-mail has caught the attention of English language instructors around the world. A great part of the interest in using e-mail is generated by the fact that it is a new form of communication that permits a new type of interaction in (and out of) the classroom. The benefits that stem from the novelty feature of using the electronic network are bound to wear off as this type of interaction becomes conventionalized. The task described above focuses on the pragmatic uses of resources available only on e-mail that will not lose their value with the loss of their novelty.

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Contributor

Naomi Gurevich is an M.A. student in the TESL program at the University of Washington. She was a student teacher in the 102A class, Spring term, 1995, and extends her special thanks to Mary Kay Seales who was the master teacher of that course.

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INTENSIVE WRITING PROJECT USING AN INTERNET NEWSGROUP

Context

These activities took place in a second semester English as foreign language class at Chubu University, Aichi, Japan. The class of 35 students was divided into groups of three to four students who wrote essays using a class newsgroup. This was the first time for all the students to use computers in writing. The class was team-taught by a native speaker of English from the United States and a Japanese co-instructor.

Description

Students in Japan have little experience in composing essays. In fact, the only foreign language writing students had done before they entered our class was completing sentence-to-sentence translations from Japanese to English. Therefore we wanted to set up a system that would give our students a lot of support in beginning to learn how to write. Two other factors are that the Japanese educational system is very concerned with grammatical correctness, and that students have a special need to learn appropriate vocabulary, since much of what they know is very stilted. Therefore we hoped that we could incorporate detailed feedback to help our students with these difficulties.

To accomplish all of these goals we set up a local newsgroup which would allow students to post their writing in a common place to share with each other and the teachers. We set up this newsgroup using an Internet news browser program called *News Agent*, free software which runs on Macintosh computers.

We then divided the class into groups according to their overseas experience. The students who had been abroad were assigned to write about their cross-cultural experiences, their surprises, or any interesting observations about life overseas. The students without overseas experience were assigned to write about things or events particular to Japanese culture. Within these parameters, the groups then decided exactly what to write about. Students were allowed to write either individually or in groups.

We decided to use the whole semester to write only one essay per individual or group. This allowed the students to write a little bit each week and to frequently revise their work.

All student writing was posted to the class newsgroup. The instructors read them and provided consistent feedback, helping the students use appropriate vocabulary, avoid repeating the same words and expressions, avoid biased or misleading expressions, develop clear and logical paragraphs, and organize their essays in effective ways. Students discussed the instructors' feedback in their groups and came up with strategies to revise and improve their essays.

In addition, though the students were not required to read the writings of other groups, they nevertheless took a great interest in them and read them on the class newsgroup.

Evaluation

From our own observations and from information gathered from a questionnaire given to the students at the end of the semester, we noted numerous benefits.

Students were able to learn from their classmates' ways of writing, both from members of their group and those in other groups. They learned how to use more appropriate vocabulary and to consult dictionaries in practical ways. They enjoyed reading about other people's experiences overseas and had opportunities to think about cross-cultural experiences. They found simple and effective ways to explain their own culture.

In reading the comments from the instructors, students received additional feedback on their writing and had increased opportunities for out-of-class reading. Another result was the increased amount of revision, which helped students review errors from a practical perspective and improve their writing.

In the course of advising the students through a class newsgroup, the instructors could find what common errors the students were likely to make, and thus address these problems through occasional in-class grammar explanations.

Finally, and significantly, many of the students started to learn how to type and to use computers for the first time. The strong majority indicated that they would like to continue working with computers.

This year's continuation of the project will add another dimension to the project. Students will be paired with keypals from a country or countries outside of Japan. In the writing of their essays, this will provide the students with additional input about the target culture which they are writing about. Additionally, it will provide students with an additional level of feedback from another student of English (or perhaps even a native speaker). In informal interviews, students have already expressed a great deal of interest in widening the scope of this project.

Contributors

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E-MAIL DISCUSSION GROUPS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: GRAMMAR FOLLOW-UP

Context

The e-mail activity described below has worked well with intermediate- and advanced-level students. For example, we have used e-mail discussion groups in third and fourth semester university language courses as well as upper-division conversation classes in both Spanish and Portuguese.

Description

In contrast to the many benefits that have been associated with the implementation of electronic mail for communicative practice in a second language, one possible drawback is that electronic mail discussions contain careless messages where poor grammar is allowed to go unchecked. We use e-mail for out-of-class discussions and require each student to contribute any combination of 50 lines of text per week to the conversation (i.e., one message of 50 lines would be as acceptable as 25 message of two lines). Each class has their own server address; consequently all members of the class receive a copy of each other's contributions. We require that all weekly contributions be received at the server by Sunday midnight. We generally change topics every two weeks.

To address the issue of grammar errors, I divide the students into groups of two or three. The groups are given the task of creating grammar review handouts that are based on sample sentences from the out-of-class e-mail conversations. For example, in our Spanish courses one group may be asked to look for errors in prepositions and another group may be asked to look for errors in the subjunctive versus the indicative. Each group prepares a list of between 15 and 20 sentences that contain the grammar error (groups also may extract positive examples). At various times during the semester each group is required to conduct an in-class review session with the other members of the class. The group participants lead the grammar review, using the sample sentences.

Evaluation

The benefit of such an approach is that during the out-of-class e-mail conversations, the students can focus on communication and content. They discuss the topic without worrying about the instructors interruptions regarding grammar errors. The grammar review is separate, but not left undone. It is our experience that by the time students get to the more advanced levels of language courses, they are tired of hearing grammar lessons. However, in the case of grammar lessons that are based on errors that they themselves have been making, the review becomes more relevant and the students tend to appreciate the specific identification of problem areas.

Contributor

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BREAKING THE ICE:
E-MAIL DIALOGUE JOURNAL INTRODUCTIONS AND RESPONSES

Context

The three journal activities described below, and all 17 described in the eight articles in this section, are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages.

The activities in this and the following entries, taken as a whole, are designed to make use of e-mail to gradually move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

Description

In class, students will, of course, be interested in getting to know one another at the beginning of a course. In the first dialogue journal topic we can capitalize on this natural curiosity by encouraging students to write an open e-mail letter introducing themselves to the rest of the class. Students should be encouraged to discuss anything at all that they might wish their classmates to know about them. Teachers might give suggestions such as a description of the students' backgrounds, their academic or professional interests, or a description of their' current non-academic interests (e.g., hobbies, sports, personal experiences, and expectations). These could then be sent to a small group of partners or, as I prefer, sent to the entire class via a distribution list address created for just such a purpose (something akin to a newsgroup, only private). By way of example, the teacher, too, may wish to participate in this or any of the following journal entries. Students should be encouraged to send copies of their work to the teacher in order to get credit for having done the work.

For the second journal topic students should be encouraged to choose a partner to respond to, or, especially if the teacher prefers to keep things simple, partners can be assigned to students in groups of two to four (cross-culturally is best). Students should carefully read their partners' entries and respond as one would in a letter, by asking questions about things that are not clear or that the reader would like to know more about, by affirming (or possibly negating) their partners' ideas, or by picking up on any theme that the writer and reader might have in common. The next step is obvious; In the third journal entry students will respond to their readers' questions, issues, or concerns which solicit more information about some of the ideas presented in the original letter of introduction. It should be noted here that everyone in the group is completing each of the above mentioned exchanges. Everyone writes an introduction, everyone responds in some form to everyone else in the group, and everyone answers or responds to their readers' questions or solicitations for more information. Copies of these exchanges should be sent to all members of each group so that everyone is able to read all parts (introductions, follow-up questions, and answers to the follow-up questions) of the three entries.

Evaluation

Since students come to us having had the experience of writing letters of a personal nature, this is a non-threatening, non-academic assignment geared towards making students feel comfortable writing for an audience composed of their peers. Once this sort of familiarity and trust has been established, and once students see that their writing is indeed communicative an appropriate to the level of the group, assignments of a more academic nature can be introduced.

This is a good assignment for introducing and contrasting the ideas of writer- and reader-based prose since inexperienced writers may leave out obvious bits of information that their peers, especially in a class composed of students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, will then encourage them to explain. Writing for an audience of one's peers seems to obviate the vacuous nature of writing which is done solely to be read (and evaluated) by the teacher, who in many cases does not have time to respond thoroughly to each student. Rather than the students' trying to anticipate what it is that they think the teacher wants to hear in an entry, these kinds of letters tend to be more personal and the audience (and hence the topics discussed) tend to be of a more immediate relevance to the writers themselves. This therefore serves to keep the teacher in touch with the kinds of experiences the students may be interested in discussing further in the future.

Of final note, as the teacher of the course, I prefer to keep a low profile for the above mentioned reasons. I therefore do not normally model the kinds of entries that I think the students should produce since I do not want the students to attempt to mimic me in an effort to complete the assignment with a good grade, thereby stifling their own creative processes and attempts at learning.

Contributor

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THE AGE OF REASON:
EXAMINING BELIEFS AS A STEP TOWARD ACADEMIC WRITING

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

For this segment of journal writing, students are given a list of beliefs that are commonly held by a significant minority, and in some cases a majority, of the American public. These beliefs may also be generated in-class by directing students to list some of the folk beliefs from their own cultures. Similarly, teachers could generate the list themselves. The most interesting topics are those that might indeed be considered true by some portion of the student body since these will inspire the most spirited journal entries. None of these beliefs should be able to be substantiated scientifically nor should any of these beliefs be able to be proven, for example, in a court of law.

These beliefs should then be compiled into a master list (the more the better — I use a list of about 50 topics) which is then distributed, preferably by e-mail, to the students. Note that the list of beliefs should probably be edited by the instructor before being distributed to the group since we want to be culturally sensitive and would not want to insult anyone. For example, if one of the beliefs pertains to the existence of god, an antagonistic argument might simply degenerate into a series of insults rather than an intelligent conversation backed by well-supported arguments.

The following are just a few examples of the kinds of statements one might wish to use in the classroom. Of course, the list itself could be modified to suit the group of students and the instructor's purposes.

UFOs regularly visit our planet and occasionally abduct people

Camels store water in their humps

Eating fish is good for the brain

Bulls are angered by the color red

Some people called "dowsers" can locate water or petroleum underground by using a forked stick

Some people can read other people's minds

People have lived past lives

People can see into the future by reading palms, cards, or tea leaves

People's personalities are determined by the situation of the stars and planets at the time of their births

The holocaust never happened

Jews were responsible for the slave trade with Africa

Americans have the highest standard of living

The CIA controls a significant percentage of the drug trade in the inner-cities

As you can see, the list can be as polemic or neutral as the instructor deems fit.

The students are then instructed to choose one of the beliefs that they find most interesting and would like to discuss, either because it strikes them as funny, polemic, or because they agree or disagree with the assertion. They are then told to write an e-mail journal entry and send it to a partner (or partners if the teacher wishes, though I would not send them to more than three people since the onus of responding to so many partners makes for a more superficial response, sacrificing quality for quantity). The entry should present an argument in which the interlocutors either defend or argue against the veracity of the belief. Students should be encouraged to draw upon their own experience regarding the truth of the statement as well as their general knowledge or historical/empirical data (e.g., bulls do not have rods and cones in their eyes; therefore, they cannot see colors) in order to substantiate their claims. If students choose to write about a topic that everyone (or at least most educated people) would find patently absurd, encourage them to discuss the reasons why some people would choose to think that the belief is tenable.

The next step in the process (journal topic #5) is for students to exchange opinions and to respond to their partners' entries on given topics. As above, students should be encouraged to agree or disagree and to support their opinions by either referring to their own experience or their general knowledge.

Evaluation

Given a sufficiently large bank of beliefs or starter statements, students will inevitably have strong opinions about certain statements and no opinions about others. I have never had any problems with students being rude to one another, but the potential to be insulting, either inadvertently or deliberately, exists when discussing beliefs. Teachers should therefore be sensitive to the composition of their classes and use their best judgements when compiling their master lists. Similarly, students should be encouraged to use logical arguments as opposed to emotional ones when refuting (or agreeing with) their partners' ideas. The teacher might at this stage make a few comments about respecting everyone's right to hold their own beliefs or opinions as well as to use the occasion to discuss what does and does not constitute polite behavior when using e-mail or the Internet.

This assignment can, of course, be repeated several times with a class if a sufficiently large list of statements has been assembled. I usually repeat the process twice before I worry about its becoming stale. Cross-cultural pairings are especially rich sources of debate about certain topics. I have had students who have been so motivated and who have felt so strongly about certain topics that they have freely chosen to continue the exchange and have sent many more than the requisite number of entries back and forth.

The purpose here, in addition to motivating students to practice writing in order to improve their fluency, is to get students to start moving away from the personal and the emotional in their writing, and instead move towards a more objective approach for substantiating their beliefs or claims. The idea is not to exclude the personal — indeed it should be considered and encouraged as a valid form of argumentation — but instead to augment and reinforce the personal by referring to more objective forms of reasoning an argumentation.

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WILL BERNICE REALLY BOB HER HAIR?
E-MAIL DIALOGUE JOURNALS ABOUT FILMS AND LITERATURE

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

In journals topics #6 and #7 students are shown the first half of a short film. I often use the movie "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" because (a) the school owns a copy and has copyright permission to use it; (b) it is a short film (approximately 50 minutes); (c) although it is set in the 1920's, the characters are all approximately the same age as my undergraduate students and the themes brought out in the film (in this case, it is a coming of age story) are all easily translatable and relevant to contemporary cultures almost everywhere; (d) there is no sex or violence in the movie making it appropriate for use in the classroom; and (e) it is enjoyable, entertaining, funny, has a surprise ending and, although the dialogue contains some archaic slang, the story itself is easily understood via the images thereby eliminating confusion or frustration on the part of the students when completing their associated e-mail dialogue journal assignments.

I precede the showing of the film with a short class discussion geared towards establishing the context of the film. Having seen the film myself, I ask questions which anticipate the general thematic concerns of the movie, e.g., What's the difference between a person from the country and a person from the city? What might a person from the country talk about at a party? What about a person from the city? How did you feel about leaving home for the first time to live away from your friends and family? I then make sure that students understand some of the most essential vocabulary in the film; for example, one thing that the students need to know is what the verb "bob" means in this context since it is central to the plot of the film and used throughout. And finally, I show the students the first half of the movie.

The students are then assigned to write about what they saw in the film and to hypothesize about how the movie will end. This might be an appropriate place to introduce the idea of what comprises a story on the most basic level — situation, conflict and resolution. Students could then be encouraged to practice summarizing skills by briefly identifying the situation and the conflict and using these as a basis for rationalizing their hypotheses about potential resolutions. I encourage them to discuss thematic content and to relate it to both their own lives as well as the rest of the contemporary world since, as I tell my students, literature and film has little or no meaning in isolation; rather, it is only when we use it to move from the specific example to the general meaning that it becomes relevant and meaningful.

Once students have completed their e-mail dialogue journal entries, they are instructed to send them off to one or two partners from the class (groups are determined ahead of time) and, as always, to send a copy to the instructor so that they might receive credit for having completed the first half of the assignment. Upon receipt of an entry from a partner, students are required to write back and respond to their partners' ideas, either agreeing or disagreeing with their partners' observations about the thematic content of the film, the evidence to support those observations, or their partners' hypotheses about the possible outcomes of the film. Students should also be encouraged to ask and respond to their partners' questions about any aspect of the content of the film that they might not have understood.

The last step in the process (journal entry #7) is to show the students the last half of the film at a later date after students have had time to complete and respond to the first set of e-mail dialogue journal entries. They are then instructed to exchange and respond to entries with the same set of partners similar to the process above, but of course this time they will be discussing how the film turns out and how accurately they anticipated the end of the movie. Students could also be instructed to discuss ideas such as whether or not they think that the protagonist (or the antagonist) is a better person as a result of the experience that he or she has had, what the other characters might have learned from the experience, or if the protagonist's actions were indeed justifiable.

Evaluation

This kind of activity, of course, necessitates that the instructor be able to control and manipulate the immediate environment of, if not the classroom, at least the virtual environment that the students will need to have access to if they are to share the preliminary experience, i.e., everyone has to be able to see the same movie or video clip or read the same text. Certainly there are ways to manipulate the virtual environment such that groups of students separated by physical/temporal distances could share the same initial stimulus for their journal entries and as such the activity described above is adaptable to various forms of virtual or actual environments.

Similarly, the same activity could be used with a news story that unfolds over the course of several days, weeks, or even months if the instructor so desired. The point is to get students to do three things that are essential to successful writing in an academic environment: generalize from the specific, anticipate outcomes based upon evidence, and support generalizations with specific illustrations from a text.

This activity is certainly appropriate for use in conjunction with a unit on literature and, indeed, the process described above could certainly be used with almost any form of text which shares the requisite textual conventions of a story, e.g., an experiment or any kind of process or event that has an identifiable beginning and end that can be manipulated in the manner described above.

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PROVOCATIVE STATISTICS: ANALYZING GRAPHS AND CHARTS OVER E-MAIL

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

The instructor will either need to assemble a handout composed of various charts and graphs or create one via the net for journal topics #8 and #9. The contents of the handout should represent a variety of subject matter so that students have a range of choices commensurate with their experience and interest.

For example, I try to find a variety of demographic and statistical information in the form of charts and graphs which include a minimal amount of written textual information. Topics tend to fulfill this criteria are welfare and poverty in the US over the course of the last twenty years; corporate profits; US defense spending relative to other nations; projected demographic changes in the racial and ethnic distribution of the US population; work and productivity in various nations; crime rates and jail sentences/punishment; ecological issues such as the rate of deforestation and the extinction of animal species worldwide; the distribution of wealth either nationally or internationally; changes in the cost of living in the US; and the cost of living in various cities around the world.

This information is passed on to the students and they are then encouraged to choose a topic of interest to them and try to find a connection between any of the charts and graphs. Once they have done this, they are to send a brief, textual summary of the information to a partner or partners (two at most in order promote a willingness on the part of the students to interact and negotiate about the meaning of anything that happens to be unclear) as well as any personal observations, opinions, or hypotheses about the implications of the data.

The instructor should stress the idea that students should think creatively about the possible interconnections between the various pieces of information (e.g., poverty and crime rates, corporate profits, wages and the environment), and to make these explicit in their discussion with their partners. If the instructor prefers, it could also be suggested that students propose a course of action based upon the tendencies or problems that the data suggest. Once the information has been exchanged between the interlocutors, partners are, as in previous assignments, encouraged to respond to each other by agreeing or disagreeing, or by suggesting other causes and effects and proposing alternative courses of action for addressing the issue(s) discussed. Some students may go so far as to question the data itself, suggesting that it may be incomplete or skewed in some fashion. This is, of course, to be encouraged. Copies of all exchanges should be sent to the instructor as well for the purpose of evaluation.

A variation on this assignment is to provide students with a simple list of statistics like the rich source of material found in Harper's Magazine in their "Harper's Index". The instructor could manipulate the listed information by including only relevant material or, depending on the level of the group and the goals of the class, create a similar list replete with entertaining, albeit irrelevant, distractors. As with the above, a minimal amount of text is included with the statistical information itself, thereby forcing students to describe, and draw their own connections between disparate source material.

Evaluation

This assignment requires students to engage themselves (and each other) in describing and analyzing data as well as in thinking creatively about the ramifications of the data. While the cognitive skills required for such an assignment are quite complex and challenging (e.g., description, analysis, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, synthesis), the level of language that the students bring to the assignment is determined by the students themselves since the text that they are given to respond to — graphs and charts — will contain few words and (hopefully) be easily understood.

The information given to the students can be easily manipulated to suit the instructor's needs and the students' proclivities, i.e., it may be course specific or it may address, for example, the issues that are most salient to the group based upon their backgrounds and interests. Since often the only thing that the students in these classes share in common is language level and approximate age, I find that the more diverse and provocative the source material the better, since students then have a greater degree of freedom in choosing the interconnections between the various data in accordance with their own interests and fields of expertise.

Because this particular medium (e-mail) facilitates the message, any data the writer deletes can be quickly addressed at the convenience of the interlocutors, thereby encouraging a negotiation of meaning when any sort of a breakdown of communication occurs. (This is something that the instructor or the students would have to make time for in the form of a physical exchange if this were done in a more traditional hard copy form.) An instructor can augment the potential for this kind of interaction by giving each student a different chart or graph to describe and discuss. If this isn't feasible, the instructor could, of course, give only a select number of graphs and charts to a particular group of students and pair them with a different group of students who have prompt material that is distinct from theirs. In this way, the activity could be seen as a way in which to bridge the gap between spoken and written competencies.

The former offers many opportunities for students to establish a context and to negotiate meaning, but little in the form of practice creating an extended, expository text, and vice-versa. Students should be encouraged to exchange information as often as necessary in order to complete the assignment, though probably not more than two or three times each since they may get bored or frustrated if obligated to interact too many times regarding the same assignment. Through such an assignment students begin to see the implicit value in moving from writer-based prose (here, somewhat analogous to spoken English) to reader-based prose.

Of final note, this kind of an assignment may also be exploited as a source rich in potential for teaching students about the idea of critically reading and analyzing source material with regards to the author's purpose and bias. For example, most government sources report only percentages of tax dollars that are spent directly for defense without including money that is indirectly spent in the form of research or foreign aid, whereas a more liberal source may do just the opposite. Similarly, a critical reading and contrasting of source material in something like "Harper's Index" often reveals comparisons that are as similar as apples and oranges. Encouraging students to see these kinds of biases is quite appropriate to this assignment and may lead to further discussion and debate.

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7

INTERPRETING HUMOR AND COMICS VIA E-MAIL

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levelsof SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

The instructor will need to collect a variety of comics on a variety of topics and photocopy them for journal topics #10 and #11. Those that are well versed in using World Wide Web (WWW) sources or other technologies may prefer to do this electronically. The various comics are distributed to the students commensurate with their interests, language level, academic field of study, or with material that is topically related to the specific class. Each student is then responsible for describing in detail the contents of the comic including the image and what is being said by the characters, and interpreting the humor as well as the thematic content of the text (journal entry #10) and sending this to a partner or a small group of partners. As with other entries described here, students who receive the entries are now responsible for responding to their partner (or partners) and commenting on any of the issues that their partner may or may not have raised. In the event that the description is not clear they need to ask for further clarification.

Evaluation

Description and an interpretation of the implicit meaning of a text are the purposes of this particular activity. While the topics discussed in the text of the comic may indeed be serious, the notion that students are working with a cartoon — something meant to be funny — serves as a good hook and a respite from what might otherwise be thought of as a just another homework assignment.

A discussion of what humor is and what purpose it serves may be useful prior to giving this assignment. The notion that some humor criticizes while other types of humor present an ambiguity (the resolution of which releases stress and causes us to laugh) is useful for getting students off on the right foot when it comes time for students to begin their text analyses.

One should be careful to select themes that are accessible to students. A political cartoon that is too culturally specific, for example, would only cause frustration. Comics that discuss the legal system as opposed to the O.J. Simpson case are certainly more accessible to international students. But, of course, at the same time, part of learning about a language is learning about the culture and the referents associated with it.

As such, any associations that students might make with current events should certainly be encouraged as examples of the reason why a particular comic might be thought funny or timely. This should form an integral part of the students' analyses. Other general topics of humor that might be appropriate and easily accessible for students are those found in local or school newspapers.

At this point, collaboration facilitated by e-mail becomes important. Through a pooling of students' knowledge about the culture, the potential for an accurate interpretation of the humor is increased. Similarly, the technology of e-mail lends itself to the activity since it facilitates numerous exchanges between interlocutors at their convenience and provides students with the protective facade of a computer screen, which creates a greater willingness in students to posit hypotheses without the fear of embarrassing themselves.

Of final note, multiple variations on this kind of an assignment are possible. For example, the class could be given a whole series of comics and allowed to choose the one that they prefer to write about. Similarly, an instructor could give the class no comics at all and instead put the onus of finding a relevant cartoon on the students. Whereas I have used this activity in an intra-class situation, an inter-class activity for distance learning could just as easily be done, in which case it would be easiest to have students find and describe comics that they have found themselves — a potentially rich source for a discussion on cross-cultural aspects of humor.

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ON A ROLE: EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF VOICE AND AUDIENCE

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

In journal topics #12 and #13, the instructor will need to assign roles to members of a group which correspond to a representative variety of points of view — antagonists if you will — about any given topic (the more provocative and polarizing the topic, the better!). Groups may be any size, though I would recommend anywhere from two to four per group in order to keep things manageable in terms of the number of pages that students within a group have to read and respond to. The roles themselves can be generated either in class or by simply asking students to brainstorm a list of individuals via e-mail.

For example, if the topic is abortion, antagonists might be a pregnant teenager, a Catholic priest, a parent, and a doctor. Once everyone has been assigned a role, their first task (journal entry #12) is to argue in favor of the position that the person would logically take on that particular issue as if the student writer were, indeed, that particular person.

Once composed, the argument is sent to the rest of the members of the group. Students should not have to identify the role they are playing, since that should be obvious from the kinds of arguments that the students compose; furthermore, the guessing game of identifying roles might be better saved for later if it is not apparent to everyone after receiving the first or second round of arguments. Upon receiving a collection of arguments, the next step (journal entry #13) is for students to maintain the same role and to respond to their antagonists entries. Allow students to make as many exchanges as they feel necessary to clearly defend their position.

Evaluation

On the one hand, I have always had very spirited discussions when using this technique — frequently bordering on the absurd since students tend to over-play their roles. On the other, instructors will, of course, want to use their better judgment when assigning topics and roles since the potential for offending does exist. This potential is mitigated by the fact that students should understand that it is only a role play and that the purpose is to explore a variety of points of view about a given topic.

As noted above, the anonymity of the computer screen tends to bring out the ham in students, often times in those that are shy in class. Furthermore, students sometimes don't have a clear opinion of their own about a given topic, but they can easily parody that of another. As such, this is a no-risk exercise which engenders an exploration of ideas and feelings about a topic indirectly. Students can easily distinguish voice and tone, which in turn may lead them to an analysis of these concepts in their own writing. Similarly, students can begin to appreciate such skills as audience analysis and logical argumentation when setting about constructing their own arguments. And finally, it may, indeed, help them to formulate or question their own views about a given issue, and to refine them in light of their given audience and stated purpose.

Note that variations on this kind of an assignment are easy to come up with. For example, in a content course based on literature or history, students could discuss an issue from the text from any of the principle characters' points of view. One could even go so far as to use dialogue journals to create a guessing game in a grammar class, for example, by assigning each student to be a part of speech and to write a short dialogue or description of its function in a sentence. Working on e-mail or, for a shorter assignment such as the above grammar game, MOOs or Talk programs, makes the exchanges — the questions and answers which move the writer from writer based to reader-based prose — all the more efficacious.

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PREPARING BY E-MAIL FOR AN ORAL PRESENTATION

Context

These activities are appropriate for teaching high intermediate or advanced levels of SL/FL student writers. They have been used in first semester ESL writing courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in the context of an ongoing intra-class, e-mail dialogue journal project. Some activities could be adapted to suit lower level ESL/EFL students; all, with minor modifications, could be easily adapted for use in teaching other languages (see previous contribution).

Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

In journal topics #14 and #15, students will select and narrow a topic which they plan to make an oral, in-class presentation on. Once they have a narrowed topic in mind, they should describe their topic and the principle focus of the presentation, give a brief outline of the presentation and subtopics, and ask the group at least a minimal number of questions related to their chosen topic (journal entry #14). The purpose of the questions is to explore what the audience's background knowledge about the topic is.

The above is then distributed to a group of two to four e-mail partners whose job it is to not only attempt to answer the various questions posed by the future presenter, but also to ask a minimal number of questions themselves about issues they would like the presenter to address during the course of the oral presentation. The obvious next step in the exchange of information (journal entry #15) is for the presenters to answer their partners' questions. Of course, at this point students may make as many exchanges as they feel necessary.

Evaluation

This particular pair of e-mail dialogue journal exchanges is obviously geared towards an intra-class activity. In other words, the purpose, as stated above, is to get students thinking about not only the organization of their material, but also the background knowledge that their audience will bring to the presentation. In my experience, the amount of time that students spend preparing presentations and thinking about the needs of their audience is directly related to the effectiveness of the presentation itself. As such, this particular e-mail dialogue journal entry is just one more way to get students to think through, in writing, what they are going to be saying to the class. It may provide a link between written and spoken English, and help students to internalize the inherent value of peer feedback and appropriate forms of collaboration for given purposes.

Contributor

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WHODUNNIT?: A LITERARY JIGSAW

Context

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Description

This activity is part of a larger dialogue journal writing project designed to make use of e-mail to generally move students from conversational, informal writing toward more academic, formal, reader-based prose.

Journal topics #16 and #17 are a jigsaw activity in which each of the students in a small group has some information which must be shared with the rest of the individuals in the group in order for the students to solve a crime. Initially, the instructor will need to prepare a variety of letters, the number of which will correspond to the number of students in each group (three seems to be an ideal number). Each letter will contain some, but not all, of the information needed to solve a crime. I do this in the form of letters to Sherlock Holmes written from the point of view of characters involved in the crime. A different letter is then distributed to each member of the group and the task of each student (journal entry #16) is to write a brief summary, deleting extraneous details, of the contents of her/his letter, and to send it to the other members of the group.

The next step in the process (journal entry #17) is for the members of the group to read the various summaries that they have received and correspond with their partners to ask any questions that they might have concerning the information or details of the event, and write a short police report detailing the events leading up to and immediately following the crime.

Since I receive copies of the students' work throughout the process of completing the assignments. It's easy to see if the students are on track or if they are following false leads or hypotheses that are not part of the original series of prompts. Often times, and especially if a number of students are getting off track, I will distribute a series of leading questions to students which they can answer by referring back to their original documents, thereby supplying their group with any essential information that may have been left out of their initial summary.

Evaluation

Whereas the skills of summarizing and closing an information gaps highlighted by this series of journal entries are necessary in an academic setting and potentially difficult to master, the context — playing the sleuth and solving a crime — adds an element of fun and play to the task. One can also use an activity such as this one to explore the notions of audience, voice, and purpose since, for example, a police report, like a lab report, concerns itself with an objective presentation of facts as opposed to opinions.

And of final note, an instructor should not be put off by what might seem to be a lot of preparation. I have found it very easy to take mystery stories from graded ESL/EFL readers and put these in the contextual form of three letters to a detective. As a source, this has the added advantage of allowing the instructor to choose material that has been written using language and vocabulary that is already at the level of the students.

E-mail exchanges often begin, and end, at the level of informal penpal writing. For beginning language students, this in itself might provide a substantial benefit. But intermediate and advanced students in an academic setting have the need, and the basis, to get much more out of using e-mail. It is hoped that the 17 dialogue journal assignments listed in these last eight entries can be useful in helping students develop skills such as gaining a sense of voice and audience, knowing how to back up generalizations with concrete evidence, analyzing the beliefs and assumptions of writer and reader and taking into account the background knowledge of the reader. If so, students will have taken an important step toward becoming better academic writers.

Contributor

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DIAD DEBATE

Context

This activity was carried out with high school students studying French IV, Spanish V and ESL. It can be used with students of any language at any level and can be done with a simple word processing program.

Description

The local bulletin board system on networked DOS computers enables our high school students to participate in real-time (synchronous) class conferences and engage in real-time "chats". Students may use the system both in a computer laboratory and from remote terminals at school and at home. While much of the activity on chat mode is of a social nature, I have turned this attractive social nature into an integral academic tool of language teaching.

Prior to heading for the networked computer lab to engage in "chat mode", I inform students who their diad partner will be that day. They must sit at least two rows away from their partner to ensure that all chatting is visual and tactile, not aural and oral. Once at the computer, students page their partners to initiate a chat. Most of the students are technologically literate and need no instruction from me. The more adept computer users readily volunteer to help the less able. When everyone has his or her partner online, I pass out slips of paper with the debate topic. Within each pair, students are designated "A" or "B", i.e., the affirmative or negative side of the current diad debate.

Sources for diad debates may come from literature, school events, or global affairs. My French IV students enthusiastically attacked the keyboard when I gave them a statement in French related to St. Exupery's *Le petit prince*: "Children are wiser than adults." Without looking at the book, students used examples from the novel and related them to their own experiences.

I usually give students 20–25 minutes to debate a topic. The computer session then evolves into an oral class discussion, followed by the creation of individual essays over the next few days.

Once I was teaching a special summer ESL class which was not given access to our networked system. I felt, however, that diad debating was so effective that I had to give it a try, be it in another format. I took the students into the lab and let them choose a partner. Students sat down in pairs at a computer and logged on to a word processing program I had recently acquainted them with. They then carried out their debates simply by taking turns typing on the word processor.

Most of these students had been totally computer illiterate but a week earlier. I asked for total silence and gave each diad a different topic, ideas for which had been generated by the class in classroom journals. Topics were of high interest to local teenagers — earning money during summer holidays, being crazy about the latest musical heart throb, and wearing uniforms to school. The students were amazingly silent and intent upon the task at hand. Maybe it was the fascination of this new mode of learning or perhaps it was the timeliness and appropriateness of the topics.

Evaluation

While students "chat", I circulate in the lab, monitoring their work and coaching them when they get stuck. As I want to see the product and the quality of the individual chats, I make sure that we have complete printouts. I ask students to do a printout each time they fill a screen. While this is somewhat disruptive and cumbersome, it helps me to monitor the various debates.

As each student's writing was in a different color on the screen, the responses could be deciphered, but the sectioned or cutoff sentences were frustrating to the students. The printouts were more difficult to read. Although there was a name at the beginning of each line of text, the debaters would interrupt each other and the text was very difficult to follow. Thus, the students' work and their comments forced us to develop some "chat protocols." Just as I encourage students to listen attentively and not to interrupt one another during oral class debates and discussions, the same needed to hold true during diad debates. Students themselves developed the necessary protocols. They devised various signals, such as two asterisks or dashes, which indicated they had finished for the moment, and the other person was free to respond.

Student reactions have been generally positive. A Spanish colleague and I asked students how the chat mode improved their reading, writing, composing, thinking, and speaking skills in the target language and how composing in chat mode was different from normal bulletin board conferences. Among the responses are the following:

> "Composing on chat mode makes you respond faster to your partner's response."
>
> "Students have to type in information to support their idea and persuade the other. This lets them think more about the surroundings and to improve their skill of debate."
>
> "Because the writing need not be very formal, ideas can flow and thoughts are provoked a lot. It is a very realistic form of conversation because it is a real conversation about a real, relevant topic with real people."

From my vantage point, chat mode is particularly effective for the shy student or what I call the tertiary thinker, the student who can't just blurt out an answer in class. Engaging in diad debates enables students to have plenty of wait time, to be reflective, to be increasingly articulate in their thoughts, to produce more fruitful class discussions, and to compose thoughtful essays.

Sometimes the activity does not run smoothly due to various technological and human problems. However, the level of engagement, the increased motivation, the commitment to the target language and the amount of student reflection make the glitches all worthwhile in the battle of the duelling diads.

Contributor

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REAL-TIME CLASS DISCUSSION ON A LAN

Context

This activity was used in 1st- and 2nd-year German language courses at a university, but is applicable to other foreign language courses of any level.

Description

The *Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment* (DIWE) is a software package containing a component *InterChange* which allows users to conduct real-time, synchronous class discussions on a local area network (LAN). *InterChange* was used in a year-long study with a group of first-year German students at the University of Texas.

Each student sits at a computer on a LAN, logs into the *InterChange* program, then follows the instructor's directions as to which "conversation" to take part in. The instructor may initiate any number of conversations or topics to be discussed, and students may either be assigned to a particular topic or given the choice of which conversation to join. The program allows students to "converse" with anyone and everyone in the class who is participating in a given discussion, including the instructor.

Users see two windows on their screen. The upper window contains the running discussion, i.e., each conversant's entries as they are sent in chronological order. The lower window contains the current entry that the user is typing. Typically, the instructor suggests a topic of discussion as the first entry, and students then begin typing their comments or answers. They then send their entries, and these appear in seconds in the upper window. Each entry or message is preceded by the originator's name, as he or she logged onto the program. Users then read what others have written and compose additional messages, replies, or queries.

During the first semester of the year-long study, only five computer networking sessions were conducted in the latter half of the semester (after the students had learned enough rudimentary vocabulary and grammar to conduct a sustained conversation), and these sessions lasted for approximately 15–20 minutes each. During the second semester, nine sessions were conducted for periods varying between 20–45 minutes. Topics for discussion ranged from weekend activities to complaints from parents about young people today, and travel experiences abroad to whether or not condom machines should be installed on campus. Due to the small size of the class, everyone in the group was asked to participate in one large discussion rather than dividing the class into smaller discussion sections.

Discussions were saved verbatim on the computer, and transcripts of the entire session were printed. These transcripts were used both for research purposes in the area of second language acquisition, and for pedagogical purposes such as discussing commonly made errors in class and having students correct their own errors as a homework assignment.

Evaluation

There are a number of advantages of this type of computer-assisted class discussion. First, in contrast to oral class or group discussions, it provides language learners with a less stressful environment for expressing and exchanging ideas. Learners have more time to think about what they want to say and how they want to formulate their utterances. They do not have to be concerned about how they sound, they are able to monitor their grammatical accuracy if they wish to, and they can experiment with longer, more complex syntactic constructions.

Secondly, learners are provided with the opportunity to generate and initiate different kinds of discourse, unlike in the more typical kinds of classroom discussion where the instructor tends to lead discussions. This learner-centered activity allows students to express a greater variety of functions as well as to play a greater role in managing discourse. They feel freer to address questions to anyone or everyone in the class, to query the teacher from time to time, to suggest new topics or steer the discussion towards topics of interest to them, to request more information or confirmation of something said by someone else, and to express thoughts or opinions that have not been explicitly solicited.

The data collected over a two-semester period from first-year German students showed that learners do indeed perform a number of different interactional speech acts. They ask more questions of fellow students as well as of the teacher. They give feedback to others and request clarification when they have not understood someone else. In general, they take the initiative more than they do in the normal classroom since the instructor's role has been decentralized.

In a normal classroom, a common vehicle to provide opportunities for learner-centered oral discourse is small-group activity or pair work. However, with such activities, it is all too common that students revert to their native language once the teacher is no longer within earshot. An advantage found with using *InterChange* is that since the entire class, as well as the instructor, reads everything everyone else writes, students thus seem to feel compelled to use only the target language. Virtually no English was found in the transcripts of the fourteen sessions.

This type of synchronous, real-time discussion requires students not only to comprehend the preceding discourse but also to express thoughts coherently and to use cohesive linguistic references and expressions. Although these skills being practiced are important components of writing proficiency, the fact that the interactional structures resemble spoken conversation suggests that this competence can gradually be transferred to the students' spoken discourse competence as well. In addition, students' comments in their course evaluations on the value of this activity were also very positive.

Contributor

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address follows…

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Appendix: Software Contacts

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http://daedalus.com/

The "Chat Box" component in the Aspects software package

Group Logic
1408 N. Fillmore St., Suite 10
Arlington, VA 22201
tel: (800) 476–8781
info@grouplogic.com

TEAMING WITH TEXT (TWT): COMPUTER NETWORKS TO DEVELOP DEAF STUDENTS' ENGLISH LITERACY

Context

The Teaming with Text project studied the effects of network interactions on the written English skills of deaf and hard-of-hearing students at the Kendall Demonstration Elementary School, Gallaudet University, in Washington, DC; and at the William D. Clinite Center for the Hearing Impaired in Tulare, California. At the Kendall School, the study focused on students ages 10 to 14, including those who had significant developmental delays caused by additional handicapping conditions or other factors. Language proficiencies, both in American Sign Language and written English, varied greatly among the students. The students included in the study from the William D. Clinite Center ranged from 6 to 14 years old, first through eighth grade. Students there were functioning on reading levels from pre-reading through third grade. On the Gallaudet University campus, network interactions are used with deaf and hard-of-hearing students from early elementary levels (8–9 years of age), through the college level.

Description

TWT was funded by the U.S. Department of Education to study the implementation of Electronic Networks for Interaction (ENFI) at the Kendall School and the William D. Clinite Center. Network interaction is basic to all ENFI activities, which vary otherwise according to instructional goals, language, and academic levels of the students, and other factors described in the project final report. During these activities, students and their teacher sit in a class equipped with a local area computer network and, usually, one computer station for each student. Class members log onto the network with their own name or a pseudonym and begin to type messages to other class members. As messages are sent, they appear on all the other screens, tagged with the name of the sender, and scroll up the screen as other messages follow. The network will accommodate whole-class discussions, or can be set up for paired or small-group discussions on separate channels. A verbatim printout of each discussion can be made at the end of the session. Class members can also display completed or in- process extended text on the screens of the rest of the class for discussion.

Used with deaf students, ENFI means that class discussions can be conducted entirely in written English instead of orally or in sign language. For many of these students, network interactions offer the unique experience of using English in a conversational capacity, yet with full access to the information. They are able to see and use the language in authentic interaction and with continuous feedback from others. Often the use of network interactions is coupled with signed discussion, either before, during, or after the network sessions. Learning English through print and using American Sign Language to support and complement this learning makes ENFI a good fit with current bilingual strategies used in deaf education.

TWT also studied the fit between ENFI and the curricula at the two schools. How ENFI fit with the whole language approach used at Kendall School was of particular interest. The project established the fact that teachers' use of network interactions vary according to the subject, instructional goals, academic and language levels of the students, and interests of the group. ENFI activities used with students and documented during the project included discussing assigned reading, creating stories collaboratively, brainstorming topics for writing, discussing math and science concepts, responding to structured language activities, and playing language games. Students also conversed about daily events, school projects, and hypothetical situations that required problem solving. ENFI activities from both schools are described in the project final report.

TWT sought to develop, test, and document ENFI activities that enhanced instruction in reading and writing and examined the effects of these network activities on the students' writing. In particular, the occurrence of language scaffolding in network interactions was examined. Examples of scaffolding were found on the network (identified in transcripts), as well as off the network as teachers and students used American Sign Language to clarify, define, and expand the English discussions on the network.

Evaluation

The progress of six students at the Kendall School was extensively documented with sample transcripts collected throughout the year, interviews with classes of students at the end of the year, and year-end interviews with teachers. Profiles of these students were developed with teacher collaboration for the project final report. Over the course of a year, these student became more confident in network writing as they were more motivated to write. They became more engaged in the writing, asking more questions, seeking more clarification, and writing more extensively on shared topics. They also became more independent, needing less encouragement for network writing. This student development is described in detail, with examples from transcripts, in the final report. The final report for the project also includes information that would be helpful to programs interested in implementing network activities. The different ways teachers used ENFI and the activities they developed are described in detail. Also described are variables that affect the quality of network interactions, challenges and solutions to successful ENFI use, and how ENFI became institutionalized (part of the ongoing program). The report is available through ERIC, ED357616, Clearinghouse no. FL021165. In addition, *Making English Accessible: Using Electronic Computer Networks for Interaction in the Classroom*, a manual based on the final report, is available for purchase through the Gallaudet University Bookstore.

Contributors

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PART II:
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Cross-cultural communication is perhaps the most popular — and most complex — way of using the Internet for language teaching. This section includes numerous ongoing projects you can join, ideas you can adapt, and examples you can learn from.

Getting Going illustrates ways of providing cultural, linguistic and technical support for initiating your students in international exchanges. *Cyber-Surveys* shows the benefits of finding and polling native speakers. *Keypal Connections* illustrates examples of ongoing penfriend communication by computer. *Learning in Tandem* describes programs for two-way peer teaching between partners of different language groups.

Class-to-Class Connections provides examples of team teaching projects in paired classes. *Sharing Stories* looks at exchanges which investigate and share international folklore. *Global Cafes* illustrates several examples of international discussion lists and bulletin boards and how they can be used for language learning. *Looking at Language* examines uses of electronic communication to promote linguistic awareness and development.

Multi-Class Projects shows the benefits of bringing numerous classes together for concrete task-oriented exchange. *MOOving Forward* gives several examples of foreign language MOOs and MUSHes, and pedagogical suggestions for using them. And finally, *Electronic Courses* illustrate examples of ways that entire courses are organized largely around electronic communication, even in one case where the students didn't have computers!

PREPARING TO WRITE E-MAIL PERSONAL PROFILES

Context

The following activities are for students of any language who are about to begin e-mail exchanges.

Description

For language students the writing of an e-mail message may be just one of a series of integrated activities. The exercises described below are simple examples of ways of warming up students before getting them to draft lengthy personal profiles. The exercises also aim to make students of all levels think about what information might most interest potential readers. The first activity is simply to put students in pairs and get them to write a long list of very personal questions that they would like their partner to answer. The trick is then to get the partner to ask (rather than answer) the questions to the person who wrote them! This can be done in front of the whole class or in pairs. Points of particular interest will emerge naturally from the discussion. Warm up exercises like this can then be followed up by getting the students to write their personal profile incorporating the best parts of the discussion. The partner, or other students, can check that nothing of interest has been left out — as well as check all the grammar mistakes (with help from the teacher). An alternative approach — particularly effective with lower level students — is to begin by giving them a published questionnaire containing personal questions and asking them to select those questions they think would be most suitable for other students to write about. Useful examples can be found in *The Q-Book* by John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri (Longman 1988). If you wish to focus on a particular grammar form at the same time as practicing questions, you could start, for example, with a questionnaire that focuses on superlatives and get students to rewrite it adding their own ideas. In this way low-level students of mine have found it easy to produce questions like the following: What would you most (and least) like to change about your physical appearance? What is the most (and least) attractive part of your personality?

Evaluation

Apart from practicing the grammar necessary for asking questions orally and in writing, the above exercises facilitate the writing of long personal profiles. By the time students work through the warm-up activities, they usually have no problems at all figuring out what they want to say. They can, therefore, concentrate fully on how to organize their ideas and how best to express them in their e-mail communications.

Contributor

Mark Irvine (MA Manchester University, UK) has taught English as a foreign language in Italy for more than 20 years. His latest book, *Write Around the World*, focuses on how foreign language classes can get the most out of e-mail projects.

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DESCRIBING ONE'S COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY FOR E-MAIL READERS

Context

The following activities are designed for students of any foreign language involved in e-mail exchanges with students from other communities. The activities work well with beginning students working as a group, but can also be done by intermediate to advanced-level students working on their own. The activities use (or can use) simple grammar but pose no limitations on vocabulary.

Description

As well as wanting to give correspondents *factual* information about students' communities, e-mail can also be useful to get students to express their *feelings* about where they live. One simple exercise is to get students to practice using noun phrases to describe their community. This is probably best done as a short brainstorming session (in small groups or as a whole class) with students being asked to build up as complete a portrait as possible of both the tangible and intangible features that make up a place. If you are working with low-level students studying English, you may wish to warm them up by illustrating some of the ways headnouns can be modified. For example, they can be modified before with:

- a determiner
- a number
- a quantifier
- an adjective
- another noun
- another noun + 's

Nounheads can be modified afterwards with:

- a prepositional phrase
- a past participle clause
- a present participle clause
- a defining relative clause

Another effective exercise is simply to get students to identify what they see as the good and bad points about their community and then to agree on a group list of five things they particularly like and five things they don't like about their town.

With all levels of learners it is probably best to have a class discussion first before writing anything more than notes on the board. With low level monolingual groups, some of the discussion could, of course, be done in the mother tongue where necessary. Part of the teacher's role is then to provide the language needed to express the ideas that the students themselves wish to communicate.

With intermediate students, on the other hand, you may also wish to focus on conditional sentences by getting them to answer questions like these:

> What would you most miss about your town if you had to leave it?
>
> What aspects of our community would you most like to escape from?

Yet another effective exercise is to begin by getting students to write a list of the questions they would like to have answered about another town. Teenagers, for example, often like to know about crime, drugs, and fast food restaurants. This can then be followed by getting the students to answer their own questions.

Finally, you can free some students to use their imaginations and write tantalizing descriptions of their communities by attracting the attention of their readers with openings like this:

> There are those who recommend you visit our town. But before you rush to pack your bags, there are just a few things you might like to know...

Evaluation

The value of the above activities is that they ask the writers to draw both on their feelings about their communities and their developing language skills to accomplish clearly defined communicative tasks.

Contributor

Mark Irvine (MA Manchester University, UK) has taught English as a foreign language in Italy for more than 20 years. His latest book, *Write Around the World*, focuses on how foreign language classes can get the most out of e-mail projects.

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WHAT IS NORMAL?: EXAMINING CULTURAL STEREOTYPES VIA E-MAIL

Context

This is a project designed to help university students learning English in a foreign language context to become more aware of cultural relativity.

Description

One of the greatest challenges facing language teachers in FL contexts is teaching students about culture. This is perhaps especially true for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers because of the global dominance of the homogenized American culture portrayed in Hollywood movies and TV sit-coms. Students have a superficial familiarity with certain packaged aspects of American culture but they are often quite unaware of some of the cultural differences which make communication problematic. Teachers have used audio and video tapes, penpal exchanges, and video letters to try to expand the boundaries of the FL classroom but nothing in the past has offered the potential of the Internet to end the cultural isolation of the FL student. In learning foreign languages and cultures, there is no substitute for contact and this is what e-mail offers students.

E-mail projects can be adapted to students of any age or language level but this activity is more suited to adult learners at a low intermediate level or above. It's a project in which students use class time to discuss various topics in intercultural communications and then use their e-mail correspondents (keypals) in the target culture as cultural informants. For many students, this is their first extended intercultural encounter and e-mail seems to be a less threatening medium for some than face to face meetings would be. It's also an authentic context in which they not only learn about the L2 culture but receive significant language practice.

The first step is to find appropriate keypals for your students. The best resources are the Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connection lists (see Appendix A). If possible, try to match students up with their peers. For college-level students, use the IECC-HE list. The basic IECC list serves K–12 teachers. Also try wherever possible to maintain contact with the other teachers involved so that enquiries can be made if there are address problems or some students are slow to respond. It works best if there is an exchange of information on topics of mutual interest such as intercultural communication, international business, language, history or culture, so students are likely to be more motivated keypals. It's necessary to have several contacts for each student because inevitably some will not be successful. There are often access problems and some human psychology just doesn't click.

Inevitably, students have different levels of computer expertise. If some are already familiar with e-mail they should be recruited to help the others. It's a good idea to set up a buddy system so that everyone feels comfortable with the technology before the project begins. First assignments should require students to e-mail the teacher and each other, and then monitor any campus local area networks so that they learn by doing. If no students have any familiarity with e-mail, someone in the computer center might be persuaded to give a short course in the students' L1. They need to know only very basic e-mail skills: creating files, receiving, sending and printing mail, and how to use a simple online editor.

When students are comfortable with the technology, have them send their introductory messages to their keypals. It might be necessary to help them with this by providing suggestions about what they should mention — their names for example! (It's amazing how often e-mail messages contain no names.) Many students also need help to personalize their first messages — to go beyond a tedious list of facts and say something interesting about themselves. I always encourage my students to develop a personal correspondence with their keypals. It's important that they get to know one another and that a relationship develops. I don't monitor this correspondence at all but I devote the third or fourth class period to listening to students tell us something about their keypals.

How much class time is spent in the computer lab depends on the amount of teaching time available and the skills focus of the class, as well as the priorities of both teachers and students. In a 90-minute class, I spend 60 minutes in class discussion and then 30 minutes online.

In class we discuss a particular topic — e.g., cultural stereotypes, the concept of normal, personal space requirements, concepts of time, and dating habits (See Appendix B). Usually there is a series of questions which students answer and discuss. These are usually very clearly defined and very specific because such an approach facilitates the e-mail partner as cultural informant approach. I've found that more open-ended questions or questions that involve some research on the part of the keypal are rarely answered. I send students a questionnaire identical to the one discussed in class which they can then easily incorporate into the day's e-mail message sent at the end of the class.

In class we consider how students respond to particular questions. How homogeneous are their responses? How different? What might account for the differences ? At a later class — it might take a couple of weeks to allow all the answers to come in — students report on how their keypals responded to the same questions. How do the answers compare? Can we draw any conclusions about culture from the differences?

Evaluation

I've had very positive feedback from students who have been involved in this e-mail project. Some have formed lasting connections with their keypals and continue to e-mail each other long after the end of the course. As I write this, Japan is still reeling from the devastating Kobe earthquake and one of my students from last term is struggling to explain to his keypal in Los Angeles the cultural origins of Japan's reluctance to accept offers of help from abroad. For me, this is the greatest success.

Only a small amount of learning happens in the classroom but if we can scatter seeds that take root and grow outside the classroom then the results can be remarkable. New communications technology really does cause a perceptual shift in our sense of ourselves and our separateness and as the limitations imposed by physical distance dissolve and frontiers and ideologies shift, we can at last begin to think in terms of an emergent global community.

Contributor

Ishbel Galloway taught in intensive English programs in Britain and Canada before going to Japan in 1993. She teaches at Tokai University's Foreign Language Center and has been using e-mail with her students since 1994. This article is based on a presentation given at TESOL '95.

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Appendix A: IECC

The Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connection (IECC) runs two lists for finding partner classrooms:

K–12 teachers seeking partners classrooms should send a message to:
iecc-request@stolaf.edu
In the message field write only: *subscribe*

Teachers in higher/adult education seeking keypals for their students should send a message to:
iecc-he-request@stolaf.edu
Again, in the message field write only: *subscribe*

Appendix B: Examples of two culture questionnaires

EXAMINING STEREOTYPES

Definition: A stereotype is a rigid set of beliefs about a certain group of people.

We all stereotype groups — it's a way to make sense out of our world: as humans, we need to categorize and classify.

With a partner, look at the adjectives below and make sure that you understand them.

friendly
rude
industrious
lazy
nationalistic
decisive
sophisticated
greedy
energetic
self-indulgent
honest
inventive
sexy
intelligent

Now, when you think about Americans, what four adjectives do you most associate with them? Choose quickly... don't think too much about it.

Next decide what four adjectives you least associate with them. Discuss your ideas with your group. Do people agree? Try to explain where your ideas came from (movies? TV? literature? history? personal experience? etc.)

Your keypals are going to do this activity too. Try to anticipate their answer to the question: How do you think the Japanese are perceived by North Americans? What adjectives will they choose?

WHAT IS "NORMAL "?

Read the following situations and decide how you feel about such behavior. Circle the number that corresponds to your feeling in the rating column on the right.

1. everyday behavior — very common
2. ordinary behavior — wouldn't surprise me
3. neutral — I have no reaction either way
4. strange — I'd be a bit surprised to see this
5. very strange — I'd be shocked to see this

Also write your gut-level reaction — that means your spontaneous emotional reaction.

		Rating
1.	A man wearing a skirt.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	Eating meals with your fingers	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Using the same bath water as others in your family.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	Arguing with the salesperson in a department store to get a cheaper price when you buy a T-shirt.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	Slurping soup loudly in a restaurant.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	A woman breast-feeding a baby in public.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	Sticking your tongue out to say hello.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	Two adult men holding hands in public.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	Adult children living with their parents until marriage.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Sniffing loudly in public when you have a cold.	1 2 3 4 5

EASY, NO-FAIL KEYPALLING FOR NOVICES

Context

This activity was used with 2nd-year German composition/conver-sation course at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Description

For several semesters I encouraged my German students to subscribe to the German/English discussion group RIBO-L, a listserve provided by the University of Rhode Island and Bochum University in Germany.

Each semester a few students took the plunge, but most were too timid to try it on their own. In the fall of 1994 I decided to make the e-mail exchange a requirement for the students in my second-year composition/conversation course. The first step was for each student to get one of the e-mail accounts offered free to all students at Memorial. I then polled the students to determine who already had e-mail experience. Four out of 20 students were found to be regular netters (people with experience using the Internet).

The next step was to send the students with the four experienced students in charge into the lab for an orientation session. I did not accompany the class. Instead the students had to send me an e-mail before leaving the session to prove their mastery of the art.

With the initial hurdle behind them, the students then had to subscribe to RIBO-L (see Appendix) and post an introductory letter. Over the course of the semester they were to engage in discussion on the list and in private e-mail exchanges with members of the list. I instructed the students to post part of their messages in their native language, for the benefit of their German counterparts, and part in German, inviting their keypals to correct any mistakes.

At the end of the semester the students were required to write as their final essay an evaluation of their RIBO-L experience, including the answers to two questions in particular: What did you learn about culture? What did you learn about language? Students were to supply examples from their e-mail exchanges.

Evaluation

This unstructured approach to keypalling enriched the student's experience without adding substantially to the teacher's workload. Although several students were hesitant about the e-mail requirement at the beginning of the course, most were enthusiastic about their experiences by the end of the course. I received several e-mail messages from these novices during the semester thanking me for introducing them to a new world. One student, who had written in his introductory letter that he didn't like computers and was only subscribing because his teacher required it, began his final essay with "Gott habe ich das gern!" (God do I like this!). The only negative comment made by students was that reading the e-mail from Germany was very addictive. They spent more time reading than they intended.

Contributor

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APPENDIX

To subscribe to RIBO-L send a message to: *listserv@uriacc.uri.edu*

In the message field write: *sub ribo-l Yourfirstname Yourlastname*

For further information, see "RIBO-L: A German-English Bilingual Electronic Discussion Forum" in Part 2 of this volume.

CYBER-SURVEYS

WHAT I REALLY WANTED TO KNOW WAS....

Context

This activity was used with U.S. high school Spanish III and Spanish IV students, but is adaptable to other languages.

Description

This project was developed around the idea of having the students find out information from native speakers via electronic mail, thereby familiarizing the students with electronic mail and the Internet as well as providing real-life interaction with Spanish speakers. Involved were approximately 40 students, arranged in groups of two to four, with access to the two computers in the high school that have a modem. Sample topics chosen by the students included peer pressure, dating practices, AIDS, how society views those who are different, drinking and alcohol, and stereotypes. The students posted messages in Spanish requesting responses to their questions, then collected and analyzed the information they received to prepare an in-class presentation.

Evaluation

After experiencing some initial frustration in subscribing to mailing lists (learning the difference between the list and the listserv, deciphering Internet and bitnet addresses, and learning to send e-mail and to download and upload text), the project turned out to be quite exciting. The students chose successful topics. Those receiving the most responses were those dealing with how other countries perceive themselves and the United States, how stereotypes other countries have of people from the U.S. and social acceptance of people who are different from the mainstream (see Appendix A).

The students were highly motivated to read and understand the responses to their surveys since, after all, this was a topic of great interest to them. The stereotypical group was very struck that most respondents viewed U.S. citizens as arrogant and self-centered. Every group had at least one piece of information which surprised them.

We had some wonderful class discussions based on the answers we received. For example, from the question as to how other countries see the U.S came a response that the U.S. once fought to be independent from England (and other outside controlling countries), and this idea of self-rule and freedom is the historical basis for our country, yet in today's world, we (the U.S.) constantly intervene in other countrys' affairs. These kinds of statements by the Latin American correspondents generated incredible discussion among my students. Students found themselves agreeing and disagreeing with the perceptions of the native Spanish speakers. We also discussed why the native speakers held certain perceptions.

Would I do this project again? Yes, with some alterations. Posting to mailing lists for Spanish speakers and USENET newsgroups under the heading *soc.culture.country* (where *country* is replaced by the country discussed in the specific newsgroup) was good. One group posted to five mailing lists and they continually exceeded their daily limit on mailbox space. The groups that posted to three mailing lists and two *soc.culture.country* newsgroups achieved a nice balance in quantity of mail to be sorted. Surveys are becoming more and more common, so finding a place to post where the readers are not inundated with surveys is important. Also, realize that if the correspondent has to pay to send e-mail, it is less likely that he will respond unless he feels very strongly about a topic. We believe this may be a primary reason why the group that chose "schools" as a topic did not receive many responses (in fact, only two). The keys to this project seem to be choosing an interesting topic, making your survey short, and posting it in a place which is not already inundated with competing questionnaires.

Contributor

Cindy Kendall has been a Spanish teacher at Williamston since 1988. Currently she is active with the ACTFL National Standards Project, as the Williamston Schools are a pilot site for the Standards.

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Appendix A: Spring 1995 Advanced Spanish Telecommunications Project

WHAT?

A project in which you will acquire information not available by conventional means.

TOPIC?

Choose something that will make people WANT to write you a response! Something that stirs the soul! Something that you could not find out from our local library!

OUTCOMES?

- Experience acquiring information via technological means which would otherwise be unavailable.
- Communicate with native speakers.
- Work cooperatively with others toward a common goal.
- Present information in a concise manner both orally and in written form.

- Compare and contrast acquired information across gender, nationality, and age.

WHEN?

By March 31:

- Have your topic chosen, four to five questions written in Spanish on the topic, and information for your correspondent to provide so you can compare across nationality, gender, and age. By keeping the number of questions short, people will be more inclined to respond.
- Type your text using WordPerfect. When you are ready to save it, save it as a WordPerfect text, and save a second version as a DOS text (mark text — control F4) In the version which will be uploaded, do not include accent marks. HINT: Save the file using helpful suffixes — for example, *survey.wp* and *survey.dos*
- Include a short introductory paragraph explaining what you are doing.
- Be sure to indicate clearly at the end of the introductory paragraph and again at the end of the message the return address of the electronic mailbox into which you wish the mail to arrive.
- Post message with a 7–14 day request response time frame. By April 18:
- Post your questions to various USENET news groups as well as any other sources indicated by the teacher. Look through the Detroit Free-net to note the various news groups available under "*soc.culture.[country name]*". Make a list of the groups to which you post. Post to a minimum of 5 groups.

HOW?

Divide yourselves into groups of 3–4. Decide whose mailbox will be the host mailbox.

Host:	You are responsible for posting and retrieving all messages. DO NOT SHARE YOUR MAILBOX OR PASSWORD — THIS CAN LEAD TO PROBLEMS!
Writers:	Write the original message.
Summarizers:	Entire group — work together to read and understand information
Presenters:	Present to the class the summary of your responses. You will use visuals and charts. Provide to the class a short written summary of your responses.

Presentations will be in class beginning May 15.

Presentations will be in Spanish, and last 10–15 minutes.

Grade: 110 points

Project met deadlines (5)

Individual contribution (10)

- Did YOU do your job? Did YOU actively participate, or did others do the work as you watched?

Clear and concise questionnaire (10)

- contains introduction, questions, respondent information in grammatically accurate form Presentation (40)

- oral is well organized, flows, clear pronunciation

Accurate grammar

- visuals used to enhance and convey information, neat
- written information is organized, grammatically accurate, neat in appearance

Written summary to teacher (35) — may be submitted on disk instead of hard copy (paper)

- copy of posted message
- list of sites where the message was posted
- copy of each response
- written summary given to class

Post project evaluation (10)

- an analysis of self, group, project outcomes

SURVEY ACROSS THE WORLD

Context

This project was carried out with second year Japanese students at a U.S. high school. A similar activity could be carried out with any language students at the mid-novice level and above.

Description

This project involved high school students in Hawai'i writing surveys and conducting them by electronic mail and in person. The project integrated all four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and helped develop cultural awareness.

First, students were divided into groups of three to four students. Each group decided on an interesting topic or theme to investigate. Then, in Japanese, students discussed the topic and hypothesized what the results of their survey would be. Since this was a level two class, some English was used during the discussion, but the use of Japanese was encouraged.

Second, students created more than ten questions in Japanese regarding the topic and compiled the questions into a survey (see Appendix B). They typed their surveys in Japanese using a Japanese-capable computer (Macintosh running Japanese Language Kit). Each questionnaire included a brief introduction of their project, the date by which they need to receive the answer, questions and names of students all typed in Japanese. As a pre-activity, students were taught Japanese word processing skills in class by using a Japanese-capable computer.

Third, students' surveys were sent to Japan. Because my students did not have their own e-mail accounts, I was the one to find Japanese people who were capable of receiving and sending Japanese messages. Their messages were sent to some college students, some college professors, some high school students and some personal friends in Japan. Most of these people were found through my personal contacts, but some were found through a listserve called Japanese Teachers and Instructional Technology (see Appendix A). In the future, students should be able to find Japanese contacts by themselves.

Despite the lack of time, (respondents were given only a few days to answer students' surveys), every survey was answered by some Japanese people. Respondents were allowed to answer in either Japanese or English. At the same time, students were asked to find at least one Japanese person in Hawai'i to orally conduct their survey. One oral interview was audiotaped for their oral grade. One group was brave enough to go to a popular tourist site, Hanauma Bay, to interview Japanese tourists!

After gathering answers from at least 10 Japanese people (including e-mail respondents) students analyzed and interpreted the results in both Japanese and English in preparation for their oral presentation.

The oral presentations were very interesting and fun. Each group talked about their hypothesis and results of their survey and discussed if their hypothesis was correct. Some groups further investigated their topic in the library and gave the class more background information and even included some demonstrations. One group's presentation was a short skit imitating a popular Japanese TV show.

Each group also submitted a written report in both Japanese and English about the survey. All students turned in their oral interview and an brief English written reflection on the project.

The last activity was to write a thank you note to respondents. Students typed their letters in Japanese; the notes were sent to Japan electronically.

Evaluation

According to the their reflections, students truly enjoyed this project. Most students reacted very positively to the e-mail part of this project. They were amazed to receive answers from Japan so quickly. Many of them liked the freedom of choosing their own topic, which was surprising to me because many other groups were struggling to choose a topic. Teachers may suggest appropriate topics according to their level, yet it seems like a good idea to leave the decision up to students. Almost all students liked working in groups. They often mentioned that because this was a group project, it was much easier and much more fun.

I was very happy to see the results and the capability of students who accomplished so much in such a short time. One of my instructions was that students had to use the comparative and superlative patterns for questions which they had just learned. By the end of this project, most students had truly acquired these patterns since they had to use them so many times in actual situations; therefore, it is possible to place a focus on some grammatical points to give functional meaning to this activity. In this way I believe students can learn the grammatical points more naturally and the grammatical points can be reinforced through this task-based communicative activity.

Students learned many cultural points about Japan and Japanese people through this activity. Some of their stereotypes of Japanese were changed. Many of my students recognized that there were many different types of Japanese people. It is crucial to have a flexible attitude without negative stereotypes when you communicate with a person from a different culture. This is an excellent activity for teaching intercultural communication skills.

Contributor

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APPENDIX A

To subscribe to the listserv for Japanese Teachers and Instructional Technology send a message to: *listserv@psuvm.psu.edu*

In the message field write: *subscribe JTIT-L Yourfirstname Yourlastname*

APPENDIX B: English translation of the students' survey

Nice to meet you. We are Punahou students: Shigetani, Sim and Nakahara. Because we have to do a Japanese class project, please give us answers for this questionnaire by March 6.

1. What kinds of music are there in Japan?
2. Is there much American music?
3. What kinds of American music do you like?
4. Why?
5. Which music videos can you watch on TV?
6. Is American music popular in Japan?
7. Have you been to an American musician's concert?
8. How much does it cost in Japan to go to an American musician's concert?
9. Among rock, classical, and country music, which one do you like the best?
10. Can you listen to American music on the radio?
11. Do you have MTV?
12. Which group do you like?

TEACHING CULTURE WITH USENET DISCUSSION GROUPS

Context

This activity can be used by instructors of a variety of languages. It will work well with intermediate- and advanced-level students who are older than 12 years old.

Description

In many USENET newsgroups, people discuss cultures of a variety of countries; for example, in *soc.culture.french*, users talk about issues in France and people in *soc.culture.german* dialogue about topics in Germany. Other countries include USA, Canada, Mexico, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and many diverse nations. The instructor selects the discussion group(s) based on the language the instructor is teaching. By selecting more than one group, students will be able to learn about cultures in different regions where people speak the target language or have a connection with the culture. For example, a Spanish instructor can choose the discussion groups of Spain and Mexico. A Chinese instructor can pick the groups of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Languages used in these groups are varied. The majority of the groups, especially the groups of the non-romanized languages, use only English, for example, *soc.culture.china* and *soc.culture.japan* Vietnam is an exception; Vietnamese frequently appears in *soc.culture.vietnamese* Some groups use both English and a foreign language; for instance,both English and German can be found in *soc.culture.german*

To begin the activity, the instructor explains what a discussion group is. It is part of an electronic "bulletin board" in which people can discuss issues they are interested in. Before teaching the students how to operate a computer, the instructor divides the students into groups based on the USENET newsgroups they would like to be involved in. For example, a class can be divided into three groups: China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. It is recommended that the instructor not teach the students how to use the discussion groups before they finish the following activities, so that the students' thoughts will not be confined by the topics or the format of the groups.

Next, the instructor asks each student to imagine that s/he is with some native speakers and s/he can ask any questions related to their culture. About five minutes later, students share their questions with their classmates in the same group and check if those questions are appropriate for posting on the USENET newsgroups. Questions should not be trivial or offending. The students should also make sure that questions are not repeatedly posted.

Thereafter, the students learn how to read and post messages in the USENET newsgroups. How to respond to existing questions in the groups will be demonstrated. Later, the groups post their questions in their USENET newsgroups. The instructor should decide which language, English or the target language, the students should use to post their questions, based on the availability of the language in the group and the language ability of the students. Over the following days, the students read messages in the group, discuss the topics, and respond to replies. The instructor monitors the discussion in these USENET newsgroups and decides on an appropriate time for the students to bring the discussion back to the classroom. To finish the project, each student writes a report about the culture s/he learned from the USENET and shares his/er report in class.

During this class period, the instructor can invite some native speakers to provide input or answer questions. In the United States, almost every university has an International Students office where the instructor can find students from foreign countries. Most international students are glad to answer questions about their cultures if they are invited. Also, many of them are willing to share their opinions of American culture. This cross-cultural encounter provides the students with a good opportunity to learn about the culture they are studying and also to learn about their own culture through the eyes of foreigners.

Combining learning about culture with learning about other language skills is highly recommended. For example, students may be required to speak in the target language when they share their ideas in class. The report may also be written in the target language.

Evaluation

Since learning about culture may be combined with learning other language skills, the instructor should decide the evaluation criteria based on what s/he would like to emphasize. S/he may evaluate students' writing and speaking. Evaluation might also be based on students' knowledge about the culture, participation in the discussion in class and in the USENET groups, and their written reports.

Contributor

Amy Sheng-Chieh Leh (*ASSCL@asuvm.inre.asu.edu*), formerly an ESL instructor, is currently a Ph. D. candidate in Educational Media Computers at Arizona State University. She is interested in integrating technology, especially telecommunications, into foreign language teaching.

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Appendix: USENET Groups

The following USENET groups are for foreign languages commonly taught in the U.S.:

SPANISH
(English and Spanish)
soc.culture.spain
soc.culture.mexico
soc.culture.venezuela
soc.culture.puerto-rico
soc.culture.peru

FRENCH
(English and French)
soc.culture.french
soc.culture.lebanon

GERMAN
(English and German)
soc.culture.german
soc.culture.austria
soc.culture.swiss

CHINESE (English)
soc.culture.china
soc.culture.taiwan
soc.culture.hong kong

JAPANESE (English)
soc.culture.japan

CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS:
GERMAN AND AMERICAN STUDENTS MEET ON THE INTERNET

Context

The following e-mail activity was incorporated into an advanced German conversation and composition course taken by undergraduate university students in their sixth semester of language study but could be adapted to intermediate proficiency levels as well. The activity served to create a new interactive resource of information on a given topic beyond the classroom and to provide students with an opportunity to contact and actively engage and solicit opinions on the subject from conversational partners living in the target culture.

Description

The students' textbook in this course is designed to facilitate discussion of a variety of topics relevant to German culture, among which is a unit addressing cultural stereotypes. In this unit, the students are encouraged to read and articulate what they anticipate Germans' and Americans' perceptions of each other to be. Although most of the students in the course grew up in a German-American region of the United States, and many had spent some time in Germany, they quickly recognized the limitations of their first-hand knowledge of Germans and were curious to know what the perception other Americans with more extended contact with German culture had of Germans and how that image compared with their own. By the same token, they became interested in how they, as Americans, might be seen by native German speakers.

After learning appropriate vocabulary, reading short literary passages and surveys on the subject, and discussing the topic extensively amongst themselves and with their instructor, students were put into pairs and asked to formulate particular aspects of the topic they felt they either would like more varied input on or further reaction to. Each group of two students was given two e-mail addresses, one from a native German speaker studying American Studies at our German exchange university in Kassel and the other from one of our own students enrolled in a study-abroad experience at the same university. The pair of students was given the task of creating a mini-discussion group including themselves and their new overseas partners. Communicating in German via e-mail, the students were to introduce themselves, explain their project of field study, and facilitate discussion by eliciting reactions on the subject from the group for one week. They then sent copies of the responses they received from Germany to other students in the class. Out of this pool of letters shared by the whole class, students selected interesting excerpts and summarized their findings in a short writing assignment.

In addition to providing students here at home an opportunity to actively use their language skills to initiate meaningful and direct interaction with their peers in Germany, the exercise also helped in a small way to foster an appreciation for the relativity of cultural perspectives. Perhaps most importantly, it helped to forge initial connections between our students here, who may study in Kassel in the future, those currently studying German in Kassel, and their German counterparts studying American Studies at the same university.

Evaluation

One of the more exciting possibilities of e-mail is the immediate, direct, and personal access students have to perceptions of individuals currently living in the target culture. With the increased accessibility of e-mail, students no longer need to depend exclusively on the second-hand experiences and cultural comparisons presented by their teachers and textbooks. Through spontaneous, self-directed "conversations" with both native-speakers and their own compatriots living abroad, students can begin to explore for themselves the complex origins and nature of cultural stereotypes and experience the simple excitement of engaging intellectually with students in another culture in another tongue halfway around the world.

Indeed the fact that the representatives of two cultures facing each other in the Internet are disembodied limited them to the expression of a consciousness. The sheer lack of visual clues to one's "otherness" may ironically serve to attune participants corresponding in the foreign language to more subtle aspects of cultural difference and thereby to dismantle ossified stereotypes. While deepening students understanding of the topic and encouraging them to see it from both cultural standpoints, the exercise increased students' personal investment in the topic, making it more relevant to them as they began to perceive themselves as "others" within a wider international context.

Much of the success of this activity depends on establishing and preparing student contacts abroad. An exchange program is a logical place to begin developing a list of addresses of students willing to participate in this "virtual connection." Not only can the input of the American Studies students be facilitated by faculty at the exchange university, but they have the additional motivation of forming friendly connections with students in the U.S., since many in fact will also opt to participate in the exchange program.

Contributor

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INDIVIDUAL ELECTRONIC MAIL WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS

Context

This activity was used with American high school Spanish III and Spanish IV students, but is adaptable to other languages.

Description

This project was developed around the idea of having the students interact with native speakers via electronic mail, thereby familiarizing the students with electronic mail and the Internet as well as providing real-life interaction with Spanish speakers. Involved were approximately 32 students, with access to two computers in the high school that had a modem. As the teacher, through bulletin boards and personal contacts I solicited native speakers of Spanish who volunteered to write my students. The majority of these speakers were from Venezuela, and were of university age. However, the age of the participants ranged from 17 to over 50, with Spanish speakers from the U.S., Chile, and Peru. All the volunteers were male except two.

While I awaited responses from my solicitation for native speakers, each of my students registered as a user on a free-net here in the state of Michigan. From the school, we accessed a local university and then used the telnet feature to connect to the free-net. There was no cost incurred by the students for their electronic mail access, and the only cost to the district was for a modem and the local phone call.

After registering each student came the arduous task of training the students in the use of the communications software and how to manipulate electronic mail on the free-net. I trained two students first, who then helped train other students. The beginning 10 minutes of each class day was spent in training and discussion of the Internet and electronic mail.

To start the project, the students then chose someone who interested them, based on the initial responses the volunteers had sent introducing themselves.. As a class we brainstormed the topics which would be discussed in the letters, and before each due date for the student postings we also brainstormed the vocabulary and phrasing required. The project description which was sent to all participants outlining the timeline and topics is included in Appendix A.

The students were very excited to receive responses so quickly from their native speaker. We used the letters not only for their content, but also for reading comprehension activities and grammatical study (use of the past tense, use of the subjunctive mood). We compared different age groups to see if there were general differences in attitudes regarding certain topics. We also looked to see if there was a difference in worldviews held by the native Spanish speakers, citizens of the United States, this community, and this classroom.

Evaluation

The project was an overwhelming success. We were fortunate that our native speakers all participated, and the students were excited to be participating and communicating in the real world. The were ups and downs of the project however.

On the negative side, the limitation of having only two computers at school meant students could not access computers outside of class. So, an agreement was reached that students could work at the computer during class, still being responsible for the material covered during the time they worked on the computer. Students also could not sit and type at their electronic mailbox. Instead, using Word Perfect, they wrote their letters in advance and uploaded them in class. The uploading and conversely, the capturing, of letters saved tremendous class time. On some days, the initial 10 minutes of discussion turned into 20 minutes. Many of the students were exploring other avenues of the information highway or discovering "how to do" something new, which they then shared with the rest of the class. Was this time well spent? Definitely. Did it take away from the subject matter usually covered in class? Yes, I did not cover the amount of material I normally would. Would I do this project again? Yes.

On the positive side, Students who previously had little interest in computers, now enjoyed working at one. The fear of the computer subsided. The writing level of the students increased exponentially with every letter. They wrote rough drafts, edited, proofed, and re-wrote, before sending their letter off to their native speaker. They wanted their letter to be understood. They also wanted to understand the native speakers' letters. They actually wanted to read Spanish! This was an exciting moment for me as a teacher, because naturally the volunteers wrote at a higher level than my students, and my students enjoyed the challenge of understanding the personal responses they received.

As a follow-up activity to the correspondence, my students completed a questionnaire (see Appendix B) which made them reflect on the whole experience. The students definitely enjoyed the insight they gained into the Spanish speaking world.

Recommendations for implementing a project:

1. Make sure students have individual accounts. This way you the teacher do not have hundreds of messages that you have to print out and distribute, as well as upload and send.
2. Have students cc themselves and the teacher in the correspondence to the native speaker. You can then verify if student met the deadline, as well as have a copy in case of any technology problems. This also means the teacher needs to plan how to store the letters (e.g., whether to keep them in a mailbox or put them on a disk).
3. Install a virus program on the workstation. Students are uploading and capturing documents on their disks.
4. Establish topics for the letters, providing some direction in vocabulary and phrasing.
5. Have easy-to-use communications software and post the directions of common commands. On the wall beside the computer was a list of common commands, and the students also received a booklet prepared by me with step-by-step instructions on how to do certain electronic mail functions.
6. Make use of target country Gophers to find contacts. I went into Ecuador's Galileo Gopher, read a file, and sent a personal message to the person listed as a resource for that server, asking him to forward my message or suggest places for me to post it. He was very helpful. Another source of contacts is the USENET culture groups *soc.culture.country* (where country is replaced by the name of the country you are interested in) but there you may face competition from other similar appeals.

Contributor

Cindy Kendall has been a Spanish teacher at Williamston since 1988. Currently she is active with the National Foreign Language Resource Center (Ames, Iowa) and with the ACTFL National Standards Project.

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APPENDIX A: Description sent to Participants

febrero 1994

A los hispanohablantes — si pueden tener correspondencia con mas de un estudiante, dime. Tengo 32 estudiantes y 27 voluntarios. Voy a mandarles una lista de los voluntarios y si no quieren que su nombre aparezca en la lista, escríbeme una carta.

La Sra. Kendall escribe a los estudiantes de la clase Español Advanzado y a los amigos hispanohablantes:

Este proyecto es para:

- establecer un mejor entendimiento entre los dos culturas.
- dar práctica con hispanohablantes nativos a los estudiantes de tercer y cuarto año.
- permitir a los estudiantes conocer el INTERNET y saber como hacer correspondencia activa dentro del dicho sistema

Aquí tienen los temas, instrucciones y fechas para el proyecto. Los estudiantes tienen la responsabilidad de mandar la carta dando y pidiendo información a los amigos hispanohablantes antes de las siguentes fechas:

	TEMA	FECHA
Tema 1:	una carta de presentación	el 25 de febrero
Tema 2:	la cultura norteamericana y la cultura del hispanohablante	el 11 de marzo
Tema 3:	el sistema escolar	el 25 de marzo
Tema 4:	los problemas de la juventud	el 15 de abril
Tema 5:	(tema abierta)	el 29 de abril

Si los amigos hispanohablantes pueden, por favor, que contesten dentro de 72 horas. Estas fechas son las últimas fechas de mandar la carta. Espero que los estudiantes se las manden aún más temprano. Si uno de los hispanohablantes va de vacaciones (o no pueden continuar por cualquiera razon) durante estas fechas, por favor notifique al estudiante o a mí. También claro que si hay algo que Uds. quieren saber de aquí en los EEUU, ¡pregúntenles a los estudiantes!

Voy a pedirles a los estudiantes una "copia dura" de las cartas mandadas y recibidas, y también una copia mandada electrónicamente a mi buzón electrónico. Esto es para verificar que los estudiantes lo han hecho.

****Nota que no hay acentos ni tildes aqui — todavía no he encontrado un programa para poner estas marcas por el sistema de correo electrónico. Entonces, no vamos a usar estas marcas aquí.

¡Doy mil gracias a todos los participantes!

(acentos añadidos para el libro *Virtual Connections*)

Translation:

February 1994

To the Spanish speakers — if you can correspond with more than one student, tell me. I have 32 students and 27 volunteers. I am going to send you a list of the volunteers and if you do not want your name to appear in the list, write me a letter.

Mrs. Kendall writes to the Advanced Spanish students and our Spanish speaking friends:

This project is to:

- establish a better understanding between two cultures.
- give practice with native Spanish speakers to third and fourth year Spanish students
- allow students to become familiar with the Internet and how to do active correspondence within the Internet system.

Here are the topics, instructions and dates for the project. The students have the responsibility of sending a letter to the Spanish speaker giving and asking for information before the following dates:

	TOPIC	DATE
Topic 1:	letter of introduction	February 25
Topic 2:	U.S. culture and the culture of the Spanish speaker	March 11
Topic 3:	school system	March 25
Topic 4:	problems confronting youth	April 15
Topic 5:	(open topic)	April 29

If the native speakers can, please answer within 72 hours. These dates are the last dates to send the letter. I hope that the students send the letter even sooner. If one of the Spanish speakers goes on vacation (or cannot continue for whatever reason) during these dates, please notify the student or myself. Also of course if there is something that you would like to know about the United States, ask the students!

I am going to ask the students for a "hard copy" of the letters which they send and receive, and also a copy sent electronically to my mailbox. This is to verify that the students have completed the assignment.

****Note that there are not any accents or tildes here — I have not yet found a program which places these marks in the electronic mail system. Therefore, we will not use those marks here.

Thank you so much to all the participants!

APPENDIX B: Post-Project Concluding Activity

Español advanzado junio 1994

proyecto e-mail

Ahora tienes copias de las cartas que mandaste y recibiste. Lee las cartas de nuevo, y contesta las siguentes preguntas.

PARTE A. INFORMACIÓN GENERAL

1. ¿Cuáles son las frases apropriadas de saluda y despedida para una carta?
2. ¿Qué información contiene el primer párrafo de tus cartas?
3. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre las cartas electrónicas y las cartas mandadas por correo normal?
4. ¿Encontraste "slang"? Escribe unos ejemplos y qué significan.

PARTE B. LA CULTURA

1. ¿De dónde es tu hispanohablante?
2. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
3. ¿Es hombre o mujer?
4. Compara la cultura del hispanohablante a la nuestra. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias y semejanzas?

PARTE C. EL SISTEMA ESCOLAR

1. Describe el sistema escolar de tu hispanohablante.
2. ¿Hay una diferencia bastante grande al nuestro?

PARTE D. LOS PROBLEMAS DE LA JUVENTUD

1. ¿Tienen los mismos problemas los jóvenes en el país del hablante que Uds.?

PARTE E. CONCLUSIÓN

1. ¿Ha cambiado tu opinión del país y de las personas de este país?
2. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias y semejanzas entre los dos países?
3. Si pudieras vivir allí, ¿qué estarías haciendo este año?
4. ¿Qué recomendarías a un joven norteamericano que va a mudarse al país hispánico?
5. ¿Te gustaría hablar por teléfono y/o conocer en persona a tu hablante nativo? ¿Por qué?
6. ¿Planeas en continuar a escribir a tu hispanohablante después de acabar este proyecto?
7. Para muchos de Uds., este proyecto ha sido el primer contacto serio que han tenido en español en una situación actual con un hablante nativo. Al terminar este proyecto, ¿tienes más confianza de poder comunicarse en español? ¿Cómo sería el resultado de estas communicaciones dentro de unos años cuando ya hayas terminado de estudiar? ¿Piensas que usarías el español en el futuro? ¿Cómo?

Translation:
Advanced Spanish June 1994

E-mail project

Now you have copies of the letters that you sent and received. Read the letters again, and answer the following questions.

PART A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What are the appropriate phrases for greeting and leave-taking in a letter?
2. What information does the first paragraph of your letter contain?
3. What are the differences between letters sent electronically and through regular mail?
4. Did you encounter slang? Write some examples and what they mean.

PART B. CULTURE

1. Where is your native speaker from?
2. How old is he or she?
3. Is your native speaker a man or woman?
4. Compare the culture of the Spanish speaker with ours. What are the similarities and differences?

PART C. SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Describe the school system of your Spanish speaker.
2. Is there a great difference from ours?

PART D. PROBLEMS CONFRONTING YOUTH

1. Do the young people of the native speaker's country have the same problems as youth here?

PART E. CONCLUSION

1. Has your opinion of the native speaker's country and the people of that country changed?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the two countries?
3. If you could live there, what would you be doing this year?
4. What would you recommend to a U. S. teenager who is going to move to the Spanish speaking country?
5. Would you like to speak by phone or in person to your native speaker? Why or why not?
6. Do you plan to continue writing to your Spanish speaker after this project finishes?
7. For many of you, this project has been your first serious contact that you have had in Spanish in an actual situation with a native speaker. Upon finishing this project, do you have more confidence of being able to communicate in Spanish? What could be the long term impact of this project on you within the next few years when you have finished you studies? Do you think that you will use Spanish in the future? How?

ORGANIZING PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS FOR E-MAIL AS A TESL AID

Context

The methods described have worked well for 9- and 10-year-old children in their first or second year of learning English. They were developed in Romania where these children are in third and fourth grade. They have also been applied with success to 11- to 14-year-old children in their first, second or third year of English.

These methods have not been used in the normal classroom environments but in special groups, of between 6 and 16 children, who voluntarily attended extra sessions outside of their normal two English lessons of 50 minutes per week. This arrangement was brought about partly because there was no computer installed in the classroom, often no electrical supply, and the conventional arrangement of rows of desks in the usual Romanian classroom is not ideal for the activities described.

The activities have therefore been constrained within a single session of between 1 an 1.5 hours per week. They utilized a lap-top computer which was brought to school for the purpose of this activity.

The correspondence described has been between Romanian children and children in countries with English as a first language, most commonly Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the USA. These contacts were located via the World Youth Network.

Description

Free correspondence using e-mail has been found to be a remarkable motivation for stimulating children to write and read in early stages of learning English. Pupils who otherwise do not readily do homework tasks will enthusiastically write a message to a keypal. The excitement of electronic mail and its speed of response appear to motivate to a far higher degree than conventional written correspondence, even when the children do not in fact enter the messages at the keyboard themselves. However, these initial attempts at written English often have a high percentage of mistakes; messages are often almost unintelligible. The problem is to direct the enthusiasm towards improvement of English and, if possible, include improvement of listening comprehension and speech fluency too.

We began by printing out incoming messages and distributing these to the pupils. They were then instructed to take the message home, attempt to understand it, and write a reply. Where possible the pupils were asked to bring the replies to class before the e-mail session so that some messages could be selected for group work.

Messages were selected to illustrate common mistakes or aspects of grammar covered in conventional lessons, or because they covered points of general cultural interest. These messages were corrected by group discussion. Lively debates often developed when children disagreed about an opinion expressed, e.g., an answer to "What is the most beautiful building in your town?"

Correction was applied only to language. There was no censorship of any kind so, as there was no linguistic error, we left alone messages such as: "Our music teacher is crazy! Does yours hit the girls and kiss the boys? Ours does."

An interesting development was that some younger children began to adopt tenses that they had not learned in the formal curriculum. They picked up this information as the teachers used these structures naturally — usually without explanation — during discussion. The most obvious and common was the simple past tense, which is not in the curriculum until fifth grade in Romania.

Most messages were entered in the computer by the teacher after the session. Correction of grammar and spelling were applied where necessary to aid comprehension by the recipient. Also, where necessary for comprehension, tenses not yet learned by the children were inserted.

Usually one or two children were able to enter their own messages during the session. Where possible children were also encouraged to read their messages on the screen, copying relevant passages as necessary, rather than requiring a printed out copy. Although this was born of necessity (neither school nor teachers owning a printer and access to one being difficult), it was found to provide further motivation to develop reading skills and to work on producing more correct messages in advance since writers of correct messages were those most likely to have an opportunity to work on the computer.

The exchange naturally had many questions and answers and therefore was very useful in addressing the Romanians problems in formulating questions. It also got them to thinking creatively about new ideas. These aspects led to the guided projects described in "What's yours like? Ours is...". in section II of this volume.

Evaluation

As a motivation to produce written English, personal correspondence with children in other countries via e-mail has been found to be without parallel.

It has been possible to incorporate this type of individual communication within group working sessions, to use it as a basis for discussion, and to use it for subtle revision and practice of grammar learned from formal lessons in the conventional class. Willingness to speak and fluency have definitely improved as a result of these sessions. Although not tested formally, the indications are that listening comprehension and accuracy in speech and writing have improved more significantly than in conventional lessons.

Contributors

Roger Livesey was a freelance journalist for 30 years and an independent marketing consultant for 20 years before coming to Romania as a volunteer in early 1993. He teaches voluntarily at several schools in the town of Suceava and is the voluntary representative of World Youth Network, a charity based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Emanuela Tudoreanu is an English teacher at Group School No.1 in Suceava and also assists Mr.Livesey voluntarily with e-mail projects at other schools.

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PEN PALS FOR PURPOSE, PRACTICE, AND PRODUCT

Context

This e-mail pen pal exchange between two groups of adult ESL students at two different Canadian universities was initiated to help students practice writing by giving them a purpose and a real audience. The exchange was arranged as part of the writing component of a 12-week intensive program, which offered five hours of classes a day, each focusing on either listening, speaking, reading, writing, or grammar. The aim of the writing component, which was based on a process approach to writing, was to enable students to develop writing skills for non-academic purposes, especially narrative, descriptive, and comparative writing.

The students in the two groups involved were at the high beginner to low intermediate level, between 18 and 54 years old (average 24 years) and had varied language and educational backgrounds, ranging from pre-university to fully trained and experienced professionals (lawyers, physicians, business people).

Description

The students were expected to get to know their pen pal through regular written exchanges in order to write a profile of the pen pal by the end of the course. Each pen pal involved was to receive a copy of his or her profile. The writing component of their course provided a workshop setting during which they wrote on various topics, some of which they subsequently incorporated into their exchanges with their pen pal. Each pen pal received a copy of the profile his or her partner had written.

There were two main parts to the course work in the writing component:

1. Writing workshops, during which rhetorical forms, especially narration, description, and comparison were introduced one at a time, through examples, pre-writing activities, subsequent draft versions of various topics, and peer feedback.
2. E-mail letters or messages to their pen pal, for which students decided which drafts, or sections of drafts, they wanted to incorporate into letters to their pen pal.

Over the 12-week period, students wrote draft compositions on ten topics and developed at least five of these to the stage of "final version" during the writing workshops. Although they wrote a first draft for each of the ten topics discussed, they were free to select which of their first drafts they wanted to develop further (i.e., write subsequent drafts, go through peer feedback). They kept a writing folder in which they placed copies of all their work, i.e., first and subsequent drafts and, where applicable, comments from in-class peer feedback, and letters/messages to their pen pal.

The e-mail exchange started with a relatively formal letter of introduction, written during a writing workshop, to the pen pal. After this initial letter, students responded to questions their pen pals asked, elicited facts and opinions from their pen pal, and included relevant material about themselves as they saw fit. Class discussions at the beginning of the course allowed students to exchange ideas on what information they might expect to include in a pen pal profile, but they were free to select the format of the profile they were to compile. They were, however, asked to map out a tentative outline for their pen pal profile to help them focus their subsequent correspondence.

The students' exchanges tended to be in the form of fairly formal letters, especially during the first few weeks, and often included primarily text they had developed during their writing workshops. As pen pals became more familiar with each other, their exchanges tended to become more frequent, less formal, and include more spontaneous material.

SAMPLE TOPICS FOR WORKSHOPS

Descriptive writing: description of self; person who influenced writer; special place, hobby; important festival or holiday.

Narrative writing: an event of personal importance; the ideal first date; happy/sad memories of childhood.

Comparative writing: comparison of selected aspect between home and host country (e.g., town, university, life style; career opportunities, human relationships, celebration of a selected festival, food, media, acceptability of smoking, etc.); way in which I am (not) like my idol.

Evaluation

Many of the students had never used a computer before this course and were somewhat apprehensive because of their lack of knowledge of computers, word processing, keyboarding and e-mail procedures. However, they found that peers were eager to assist them, which helped create a mutually supportive environment. As students had access to the computer labs during independent study hours, many took the opportunity to spend additional time on their writing or to acquire keyboarding skills from "typing tutor" software. They considered this opportunity to work with computers a very valuable part of the course.

In addition, students were very positive about the pen pal exchange and indicated that they enjoyed producing their pen pal's profile. They were surprised to find that they wrote more than they anticipated and started to look forward to their writing classes. Many students felt that their fluency and confidence in their writing ability had increased greatly due to the exchange. They considered the real audience and quick responses made possible through e-mail important motivating factors. Also, they enjoyed the supportive atmosphere during workshops, but thought that the most important aspect was the final product, which provided a focal point for many of their exchanges and the course. All the students indicated that they would like to take another writing course organized along similar lines.

The two instructors involved agreed that the e-mail exchange had a very beneficial effect on the students' motivation. Their previous writing classes often included students who lost interest as the course proceeded, but the students involved in the pen pal exchange frequently used their own time during individual study hours to complete letters and compile the pen pal profile.

Contributor

Dr. Hedy McGarrell, an Associate Professor at Brock University, Canada, is currently a Visiting Senior Fellow at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, in Singapore. She lectures in linguistics, language acquisition and language teaching methodology and coordinates the ESL writing and grammar courses offered at Brock University.

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TWO SEMESTERS' OF EMAIL KEYPALLING: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

Context

Two semesters of exchanges between university ESL students in Hong Kong and Canadian high school students are described. The lessons learned are applicable to other exchanges involving keypals.

Description

BACKGROUND

John Wong of Language Institute, City University of Hong Kong was planning for an English course he was going to teach in the summer of 1994. He is an advocate of e-mail keypalling projects and has been collaborating with mostly American university teachers. Since it was summer and he would be teaching part-time adult working students, he thought he could enlist the help of American high school teachers who were on summer vacation and who would be interested in some communication with Hong Kong students studying English. The response was overwhelming. Each of John's students was eventually paired up with three to four e-mail keypals.

One of the responses was from Canada, who happened to be John's first Canadian e-mail contact, and whose offer John willingly and gladly took. The summer course proved to be one of the courses most highly evaluated (by students) that John has ever taught. It was through this first Canadian e-mail contact that John got to know his second Canadian contact, Pam Cowan, who happened to be very determined to try out the new technology. Pam's determination can be seen by the fact that she is using her personal account to receive and to send all the e-mail for her students. According to Pam, this lack of individual accounts at times led to some inconveniences with regard to time spent transfering and posting letters. However, as Term 1 settled in these were overcome.

THE PROJECT

John and Pam started discussing possibilities for collaboration in August, 1994. Among other things, they decided that a video be exchanged between the two partner classes, featuring a self-introduction from all the keypals and some scenes of the two cities and the two campuses.

As with most e-mail keypalling projects, students are expected to communicate weekly. The Hong Kong students are taking a university year one English Foundation Program; the Canadian students are taking courses on CanadianFamily (OAC) and World Religions (grade 12).

For the Hong Kong students, the only requirement was that they write weekly. Students were, however, encouraged to seek opinions from their keypals when it comes time for regular course assignments such as their oral presentation and the course essay. Otherwise, they can choose their own topics for their weekly communications. Students were taken to the departmental CALL Room every week and were given approximately one hour to do e-mail. They were required to save all incoming and outgoing messages to diskettes, which were collected at the end of the semester.

The Canadian students were also supposed to write on a weekly basis. Initially Pam had hoped that the students could exchange ideas based largely on the core curriculum of World Religions and Canadian Family. It quickly became apparent that this was going to be more difficult than she had originally anticipated.

Despite the anonymity of e-mail, some of the Hong Kong students were uneasy about discussing their families, religions, or lifestyles in any detail. As a result, most of the letters quickly developed into more of a personal inventory rather than a pedagogical one. At first this was dismaying, but Pam quickly realized that the mere fact that an exchange of information and ideas was taking place had intrinsic merit.

Evaluation

The first semester was considered to be a success by most of the students involved. The Canadian students evaluated the project highly in their post-project essays. The Hong Kong students showed their enthusiasm in the way they took part in filming scenes and activities on their campus for their Canadian keypals. They were all thrilled to be able to finally see and hear their keypals when the video tape arrived near the end of the semester. Some of them also sent each other Christmas cards through air mail and promised among themselves to continue writing through regular mail.

It was only natural to expect things to be even smoother the second time round. At the time of the writing of this paper, the end of the second round of connection is fast approaching. But unfortunately, things are taking a downturn. On average, only about three messages have been exchanged between each of the Hong Kong-Canadian pairs. The problem seems to lie mainly with the Hong Kong students, in the sense that they have not been writing as much as their Canadian counterparts. But there are obviously problems which stemmed from the university's computer network, which was being upgraded in a certain week and somehow caused the communication to break down for more than two weeks. Then there was the interruption of almost a week's holiday for the Hong Kong students. With a program such as keypalling, fairly constant reinforcement in the way of letters sent and received is a vital part of the process. Students quickly lose interest in activities when their letters go unanswered.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

1. Somehow the success of the first connection gives one the wrong idea that the second connection should be easier, at least since the two teachers have come to know each other better and are strong believers in the educational potential of this type of telecommunications project. In the light of the second semester's "failure", one knows that every connection is a whole new challenge, for new variables creep in from all directions: new batches of students with different personalities, different group dynamics, different majors, ever increasing new possible applications of computer-mediated learning that can be tried out in class. To help prevent a reccurrance of the second semester's situation, more careful track must be kept of letters written and letters received. Students must remain committed to the program for the duration.

2. One of the Canadian students wrote in his post-project compulsory evaluation essay that the project was unstructured, that the only requirement was that they write to their keypal at least once a week. Another Canadian student wrote that he found it hard to steer the conversation to the topics he was supposed to discuss. Despite this "problem", they both enjoyed the experience very much. Obviously, the essential element in such kind of communications is that messages be exchanged regularly, something which takes priority over the course required topic choice. If the teachers can make sure communication takes place regularly, the rest will probably take care of itself.

   It has to be made clear from the outset that having a keypal is exactly the same as having a friend. It carries with it the weight of responsibility and commitment. You are not just writing an anonymous essay or term paper; there is a vibrant human at the other end who wants to communicate with you.

3. In both semesters, a video exchange was included and is scheduled to take place near the end of the project period. It is felt that it gives each side a chance to bring the human dimension to the project. For the Hong Kong students, it is also good listening practice; for the Canadian students, they get to understand the Hong Kong culture better. Since the video is an important part of the project, it may improve the communication if it is exchanged at the beginning rather than the end of the project period, if time allows the exchange of only one tape. It may also increase the keypals' commitment to the project.

4. All of the above notwithstanding, we are willing and eager to try again. As of September 1995, all students at Pam's school in Ottawa will have their own e-mail account. They will still, however, have to submit their letters on disk to their teacher for verification. Having individual accounts should increase the flexibility of the project from the Canadian end. Even though by all accounts term 2's efforts have not been successful, Pam's students still ask "did we receive any letters today?" All this goes to prove that despite the limitations and failures, students are a resilient lot who are eager to experiment through the medium of e-mail. As long as we can impress upon both groups of students the importance of carrying on a regular correspondence, we expect that students on both sides will continue to benefit.

Contributors

John Wong is a lecturer in the English section of the Language Institute at City University of Hong Kong. He regularly incorporates computer-mediated communication and the Internet in his teaching. Pam Cowan is a secondary school teacher of history, geography and sociology in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada. She has introduced the use of the Internet to her ninth and twelfth grade students this year.

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LEARNING IN TANDEM

PERFECT MATCH!: A SECOND LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Context

This activity was devised to provide an authentic context for the practice of written skills by Non-English speaking background (NESB) students using the Independent Learning Center (ILC) at the National Center for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, Sydney. It is suitable for both English as a second language and foreign language students at intermediate to advanced levels.

Description

The Independent Learning Center provides support services and facilities to NESB students at Macquarie University for the development of English language and independent learning skills. Integral to the service is an extensive collection of material in print and multimedia format for the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Students using the ILC displayed a desire for the practice of productive skills in an authentic context, yet the use of this ILC material for such activities was obviously limited. It appeared necessary therefore to establish a new service involving an authentic communicative activity ideally with native speakers. It was felt the main difficulty in establishing and maintaining such a service was in motivating native speaker involvement and commitment to the program.

A solution to this problem was found in the population of students on campus studying foreign languages who possessed a similar need to the NESB students, i.e., a need to practice productive skills in an authentic context with a native speaker. An exchange of practice in L1 for practice in L2 therefore provided the basis for the establishment of a writing and a conversation exchange program. For example an Australian student studying Japanese as part of a Bachelor of Arts could be matched with a Japanese student studying in an intensive English course. The writing program utilized the university e-mail system which provided the advantage of flexible access in terms of time of day and location on campus. Thus day and evening students could participate in the program from a variety of locations on campus or even at home.

Each semester the Second Language Exchange Program commences with promotion via posters around the campus, advertisements in the student newspaper, and announcements in lectures and tutorials within the School of Modern Languages and the National Center for English Language Teaching and Research. Interested students complete a registration form detailing information including first language, second language, current course, hobbies or general interests, preferred partner characteristics, length of time in Australia, and why they wish to join the program. Applicants are then matched according to this criteria by the ILC Coordinator. Students are frequently specific about their preferences for a partner, often requesting partners from the same subject discipline, with particular hobbies, or even from particular regions or cities of a country they may have visited.

A time is then arranged for the matched pairs to meet face to face to check their compatibility in terms of L2 level and what they hope to achieve in the program. At the beginning of the semester the introduction of partners is generally done in groups to save staff time. Parameters of the program are negotiated between the students with guidance when necessary from the ILC Coordinator, and instructions are provided on the use of the e-mail system. Students may participate by answering messages alternately in L1 and L2, or writing solely in L2. However this does not enable the L2 speaker to observe vocabulary and structures from the native speaker so a method of communicating in both languages is recommended by selecting a topic for discussion in L1 and another topic in L2. This not only enables the L1 writer to model language for the L2 writer but also accommodates differing needs of the partners. For example, the Australian student referred to earlier may be at an intermediate level and wish to communicate in the genre of letter writing, while the other partner, a Japanese student at an advanced level, may wish to practice academic writing. This demonstrates the strength of the program in meeting the individual needs of students which in turn complements the existing services of the Independent Learning Center.

Evaluation

A formal survey of the program using an e-mail questionnaire is planned. Informal evaluation of participants to date has indicated an increased confidence in communicating in the students' L2 and an appreciation of the opportunity to extend cross cultural awareness and to establish friendships. This is gratifying, as an underlying objective of the program is to assist in the integration of overseas students into the mainstream student community and to help all students to appreciate the variety of cultures on campus.

The Second Language Exchange Program could easily be adapted to a classroom context, particularly if an exchange was arranged between two monocultural groups such as a class of English speakers and a class of Italian speakers.

Contributor

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INTERNATIONAL E-MAIL TANDEM NETWORK

Context

The *International E-mail Tandem Network* is available to all university students and other adults who want to improve their foreign language skills through e-mail. Universities in many countries work on its organization and particularly on the creation of didactic material for learners, teachers, and organizers alike; this is sponsored by the European Union's LINGUA Program. Languages currently studied include English, Spanish, French, Danish, German, Swedish, Portuguese, and Japanese.

Description

We refer to language learning in tandem when two people with different native languages work together, helping each other, not only to learn the language, but also to learn about their partner's way of life and work.

As a rule tandem learning is intercultural learning. It is also autonomous learning as neither partner is trained to teach; both partners are responsible for their own learning and should tell the other one what she or he can do for them. Last but not least it is learning in a partnership, as both of them must make sure that the other partner profits from the arrangement as much as they do.

Language learning in tandem is easily adaptable to different language learning contexts. In the last few years tandem language learning has enjoyed increasing popularity, especially in Europe between university students with different native languages, exchange pupils and their hosts, and tourists.

E-mail now gives the opportunity to create long-distance tandem partnerships, where the communication takes written form and both partners remain in their own living and studying environment.

Here's an example of how tandem partnerships can work:

Carmen studies Engineering at Oviedo University in Spain. She has been learning German for two years and hopes to soon go on a work placement in Germany. Her e-mail tandem partner is Ulrike, who is a Romance Studies student at Bochum University in Germany.

Ulrike and Carmen write to each other at least twice a week, when they talk about personal experiences and problems (mostly in their own native language). At the moment though, this is taking second place in favor of more serious tasks.

Carmen has to apply to German firms for the placement and sends the first draft of her letters and Curriculum Vitae to Ulrike, who then corrects the mistakes and, more importantly, suggests stylistic alterations. Often she explains in Spanish what she wants to say and asks Ulrike to find the correct German way of expressing it. One firm had already answered and Carmen sent Ulrike a copy of the letter because she did not understand everything.

As for Ulrike, she must pass her next translation course exam and therefore sends Carmen tasks from the course, together with answers and any questions she has about it. Carmen, though being able to tell her whether the Spanish version of the text is acceptable, is not able through her particular knowledge of German to evaluate the quality of the translation.

Even while helping their partner, both of them think that they themselves also learn a lot. They also think it an advantage that they can express something in their own language and need not feel guilty, as even this can be important for the other partner. Ulrike and Carmen also know that interesting tasks are available for tandem partners through the data-base (see below), although they do not have enough time for them and think they learn enough in their own way. At first Ulrike and Carmen found correcting each other's work boring and very time consuming, though now they have learnt not to correct everything, but rather to discuss with each other what sort of things should be corrected.

The International E-mail Tandem Network organizes this kind of language learning in e-mail tandem. It pairs up tandem partners; provides discussion forums, where learners and teachers alike can communicate with each other; and it creates data-bases, from which learners, teachers and organizers can find help. The network is made up of an increasing number of bilingual subnets: German-English, English-French, English-Spanish, French-Spanish, German-French, French-Spanish, Danish-German, German-Japanese, German-Swedish, and German-Portuguese.

Every bilingual subnet includes access to a central 'dating agency', which pairs up every user with a tandem partner. It includes at least one bilingual forum which provides the opportunity for questions to be asked and answered as well as general discussion The forum also gives users the chance to seek partners with the same interests as themselves. They can write in their native language or in the foreign language or both. Finally, every subnet includes a tandem data-base providing tasks, explanations and suggestions for users. Through these data bases (which are still at the development stage) tandem partners will be able to make their own work available to other users.

At least two coordinators (one per language if possible) are in charge of every subnet. The coordinators lead the forum's discussions, are responsible for the development of the data-base and make decisions about other services which could be made available in their subnet. Special forums for joint projects between individual classes, specialized services and online chat meetings for example, could be developed.

All coordinators have freedom with the running of their particular subnet, but it must be run according to the International E-mail Tandem Network's basic principles. For example, priority is given to language learning between partners with different native languages (i.e. tandem), the network must be as open and as non-commercial as possible to provide access for all adult learners, and must allow developed materials to be exchanged freely between the subnets. New organizational methods, tandem tasks, didactic help, and similar work developed by one particular subnet can be adopted by other subnets.

All subnet coordinators and the organizers at the various institutions involved make joint decisions about the network's future development, such as the setting up of new subnets, the nomination of subnet coordinators and the defining of the network's main aims.

The International E-mail Tandem Network thrives at the same time on these initiatives from the individual subnets and on the co-operation between the subnets to solve common or similar problems.

Evaluation

The network's fast development and the increasing number of users in the subnets (in April 1995 there were about 900 users) proves that teachers as well as learners are attracted to the idea of e-mail tandem.

Although there are organizational and technical problems still yet to be solved (e.g., access to the Internet for everyone; the further development and simplifying of access to the information services or data-bases; and capability for different alphabets and writing systems), the most important task which lies ahead is the development of didactic materials. If we want e-mail tandem to be more effective than normal pen-friendships, it is important that we prepare our students for autonomous learning, provide qualified help (materials and advice) for tandem work and advise our colleagues how to integrate e-mail tandem into the foreign language curriculum.

There are at the moment 11 European universities and one American university working together on the European Union's LINGUA project, which started in July 1994. These are: Åalborg (Den), Aarhus (Den), Bochum (Ger), Coimbra (Por), Dublin (Irl), Mitthögskolan Härnösand (Swe), Oviedo (Spa), ENST Paris (Fra), Rhode Island (USA), HKL Sittard (Holl), Sheffield (UK), Trier (Ger). Other participating institutions are: Goethe-Institut Lima (Peru), Matsuyama University (Japan), and Université de Montréal (Canada).

Contributor

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Appendix

Up-to-date information about the existing subnets, the access possibilities, and the persons and institutions involved is easy to access on the World Wide Web:

http://tandem.uni.trier.de

http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/rub-slf/Index.html

L'HISTOIRE, MON HISTOIRE: COMPARING FAMILY HISTORIES VIA E-MAIL

Context

This activity was used in a second semester elementary French class at the University of California, Berkeley.

Description

In the spring semester of 1995 my French class began an e-mail correspondence with a very special group of students from the Lycée Frédéric Mistral in Fresnes, France. Earlier that year these high school students had published a book entitled "L'Histoire, mon histoire," which was awarded the Memories of Immigration prize by the Foundation for Republican Integration in France. Their book was composed of individual responses to a question put to them by their history teacher, Sabine Contrepois: "In what way has your family been touched by history?" Because many of the students were from immigrant families, their stories dealt with wars in Armenia, Spain, Algeria, Angola, Vietnam, and the former Yugoslavia; repression in Poland, Portugal, and Cameroon; colonization in Mali; slavery in the Antilles; political upheaval in Haiti; and resistance movements in Europe. The goal was to approach the study of history from a personal perspective, to illuminate the diversity of the students' cultural and historical backgrounds, and to give public voice to a traditionally disenfranchised class of young people. Their achievement was reported in numerous French newspapers, on national television, and in the New York Times (November 25, 1994).

I contacted Madame Contrepois and proposed an e-mail exchange between her high school students and my French students at Berkeley. Like her students, mine were of diverse backgrounds and origins. How might their family experiences of immigration and acculturation be similar? How might they be different?

We began by reading the stories printed in "L'Histoire, mon histoire." My students watched segments of a video of the students' appearance on La Grande Famille, a French television show, to see and hear the young authors discuss their stories orally. My students then wrote their own accounts of how their family histories intersected with History. We asked both groups of students to write responses to four questions: Who am I? What does Berkeley represent to me? What do I expect from this correspondence? Why did I pick the particular story that I told and not another one? Essays and answers were sent via e-mail to France. Both groups then freely exchanged questions, responses, and comments.

Sabine Contrepois has stimulated interest among her colleagues at the Lycée Frédéric Mistral and we envision expanding the project next year as follows:

On the American side, two sections of elementary French and their two instructors will be involved. On the French side, two classes (one vocational education, one general education) and seven teachers (from the disciplines of French, English, History, and Art) will participate in the project.

The project will evolve in three phases, organized by mode of expression (description, narration, and argumentation).

We will begin with description of students' environments: their neighborhoods and cities, accompanied by photos, videos, and sound recordings (possibly transferred over the Internet). Some of the French students live in ghettos, others in privileged neighborhoods. The Berkeley students hail from various regions of the U.S. We anticipate that students' representations of their respective environments and the ways those representations are interpreted by the other group will stimulate very thought-provoking discussions. The description phase of the project will also involve a self-portrait that outlines facts of birth, family, and schooling. Students will learn about details of one another's families and be able to compare aspects of the French and American educational systems.

The second, narrative, phase will begin with family narratives. Students will write about their family origins and how they came to live where they do. They will then narrate an historical event that has involved or confronted their family, and support their narrative with photos or other documentary evidence.

The final, argumentative, phase of the project will involve questions such as: What does it mean to be American/French? What does it mean to be a foreigner in the U.S.? In France? What do I expect of American/French society? Which of these expectations are tied to the government? What are my dominant preoccupations concerning my society? One goal of this phase of the project will be to understand the cultural presuppositions that underlie the students' texts—their own as well as those of the others.

These three parts will be treated progressively during the school year. After each exchange of texts, a period of time will be set aside for individual students to correspond with one another to ask specific questions and provide feedback.

Evaluation

As of this writing, the project is in progress. It is therefore too early to assess the outcome in a summative way. Nevertheless, student response has been overwhelmingly favorable. While ostensibly an exercise in communicative language use, this e-mail exchange has been at least as significant in enhancing students' cultural and historical awareness as well as their overall motivation in learning French. For example, in discussing the French family, students are not restricted to studying textbook descriptions of fictional families. They learn about real families of various social backgrounds and traditions, living in different environments, and each with its own particular perspective on the world. Students have expressed great satisfaction in learning about important historical events of which they had little or no previous knowledge, such as the Algerian war or the Armenian massacre of 1915. Many students have been pleasantly surprised to find that what they are learning in French class connects with what they are learning in their other courses in history, sociology, and anthropology.

Contributor

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U.S. LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE: A TRANSATLANTIC RESEARCH PROJECT

Context

Using e-mail, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the University of Sofia, Bulgaria engaged graduate students in Applied Linguistics at the University at Albany, State University of New York as cultural, linguistic and literary resources during the piloting of a unique, literature-based EFL curriculum.

Description

Prior to 1989 (Bulgaria's year of independence from Soviet rule), access to the English language was restricted. Contact with the language of English-speaking cultures was limited to dated, state-controlled texts and Radio Free Europe transmissions. For students and scholars wishing to learn English, few resources were available; those that were accessible were, as might be expected, fairly traditional, static, and dated. Since democratization, there is a free flow of information to Bulgarians, including Internet access. This project involved using that access in a way complementary to contemporary practices in second language learning and teaching.

In 1994, a United States Information Agency (USIA) sponsored exchange brought together the authors and, in time, the authors' students on a collaborative language learning and research project. Access to personal computers and e-mail had recently become a reality for the English Department at the University of Sofia. The authors set out to devise and implement pedagogically-driven uses for that technology. We engaged in numerous planning sessions in the U.S. that resulted in the development of a new EFL curriculum for University of Sofia students — a curriculum that would capitalize on the availability of large amounts of linguistic data, software tools, and communications technology.

These curricular changes meant replacing an instructional format that values traditional language appreciation (philology) with the goals and practices of communicative language teaching. One of the most radical aspects of these changes was to move from a discrete topic and skill orientation — one that had dominated students' language learning experiences to date — to an integrated skills approach to second language acquisition; that is, all five language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation) would be practiced at the same time with the goal of communicative competence guiding all language learning activities.

Contemporary U.S. fiction became the central material for the revised curriculum. Popular, anthologized short stories were made available to the University of Sofia for the project. Audiotapes of selected scenes — dialogs, monologues, descriptions — from these stories were recorded in the U.S. by TESOL graduate students at the University at Albany. These recordings serve as the base material for listening practice both in and out of class. A response-based approach to the reading of these short stories requires that students respond to plots, themes and characters from their own personal experiences and perspectives. Students do so both in writing (dialogue journals) and during in-class discussions. The stories were selected for their relevance and motivational value for this young adult population. They are, by nature, also rich in U.S. language and culture.

In addition to reading, writing, and talking about the literature, students use the stories as a primary resource for developing and testing out hypotheses about the structure and use of American English. Their approach to learning English grammar is one of collaborative discovery and analysis of language in use. Students use concordancing software and a variety of corpora of the English language on CD-ROM to test out their hypotheses regarding the rules of English. In addition, they use their e-mail partners in Albany, New York — TESOL graduate students — as a critical resource. It is through collaborative, discovery learning that they construct and will eventually author their own English grammar text. This collaboratively constructed text is a public document that all EFL students in the Department can study, amend, and annotate as they wish. It is a document that will be used and built upon in future years.

Implementation of this communicative, literature-based curriculum began in the fall of 1994 and is ongoing. Due to initial difficulties with student access to machines with network connections in Sofia, the e-mail exchange portion of the project had a slow start. Because of access and security issues, the Bulgarian students had to travel quite a distance from their campus to use a machine with a network connection. When participating U.S. students received their initial message, it was dense with questions about U.S. language and culture that the Bulgarian students had been storing up over a two-month period. Questions addressed two areas: the structure of English and aspects of American culture. Their queries arose from reading and talking about their short stories, building idiom dictionaries, and their grammar text. As is evident in the list of sample questions below, the kinds of information these students seek concerns language in use in rich cultural contexts.

Here are some sample questions that students sent by e-mail:

> "What do the expressions 'weigh in' and 'chow down' mean?"
>
> "Why shouldn't you...
>
> > ...cast pearls before swine?
> >
> > ...look a gift horse in the mouth?
> >
> > ...buy a pig in a poke?"
>
> "What are 'twinkies'? 'oreos'?"
>
> "We read about some of the issues related to contemporary American society. I hope I don't sound offensive. Excuse my ignorance!!!! So, what about the minority problem? How do Americans feel about it? Do Americans make attempts to integrate the minorities in the society?"
>
> "What about the Vietnam war? What is the attitude of Americans towards this issue?"
>
> "What is the semantic function of 'so much' in the example; run through my fingers like so much water?"
>
> "We read and discussed David Leavitt's short story 'Gravity'. We tried to figure out what was exactly the boy's disease but found that difficult. It could be AIDS, but then again it could be anything. Perhaps the clue to that is — 'The DHPG injections she took in stride — she'd seen her own mother through her dying after all.' — What is DHPG? — What is the idea behind the expression 'she took in stride'?"

Evaluation

The Sofia students receive ongoing feedback on their second language growth. This is in the form of peer and instructor feedback on their portfolio of written work. Portfolios include students' dialog journals, draft and final versions of weekly essays, and printouts of e-mail exchanges with their U.S. partners. Quality of participation in collaborative discussions, and

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activities such as the building of the English Grammar text, also figures into overall student assessment.

Participating U.S. graduate students found the Bulgarian students' questions both relevant to their studies in applied linguistics and challenging. These questions, they reported, opened up their eyes to the complexity of the language and culture they were being trained to teach: "It was a humbling experience to be asked about the language you use everyday, all your life, and not have a clue as to how to answer it!"

Another participant was shocked at how little thought she had given to aspects of her own culture. The graduate students put a good deal of thought into responding thoroughly and clearly to these questions. They find the kinds of thinking and articulating that goes into this exchange very powerful. Participants on both sides of the Atlantic are enjoying the project and feel they are benefiting a great deal from these conversations.

Contributors

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"WHAT'S YOURS LIKE? OURS IS...": A MOTIVATING E-MAIL PROJECT FOR TESL

Context

A simple single-event, loosely structured e-mail project is described. The project involved a group of about 20 children, who usually work in three groups of seven pupils. They are 9 and 10 years old, in third and fourth grade in Romania, and in their first or second year of studying English. The project was an 'out-of-normal-hours' activity.

Description

The Romanian students involved in this project corresponded individually via e-mail with children in an elementary school in Pensacola, Florida, USA. The American children had described 'field-visits' in individual communications. This led to the idea of duplicating a field visit and comparing experiences. The project described led to longer term projects which were still ongoing at the time of this writing.

> "We are going on a field visit to the Space Center".

This line from an e-mail message from a child at Hallmark Elementary School, Pensacola, Florida, to a keypal at the Mihai Eminescu School in Suceava, Romania, led to a comment to the effect of "We wish we had a Space Center." Marketing is still in its primitive stages in Romania so the euphemism "Space Centre" was not recognized. Suceava has, in fact, one of only three planetariums in Romania. It is no more than a ten minute walk from the school. Only one child had been there.

The project was undertaken at an early stage in using e-mail. Very few of the potentialities were explored or realized. The goals were to compare the two facilities and to compare the children's responses. No attempt was made to organize this as a group project. All the information about the American facility and the children's impressions of it were obtained from individual keypal messages. Information about the Romanian facility was returned in the same way.

Group activity was confined to three areas: the visit itself, discussion of the visits at the following group session, and discussion of individual written contributions. The children in Florida visited their Space Center as a normal field visit. Though not unknown, such visits are not usual in schools in Suceava. Our visit was arranged on a Saturday afternoon. The discussion was arranged for the following Tuesday e-mail session. Before the Tuesday e-mail session the children wrote messages about the visit for their keypals. These messages were then used as the basis for discussion.

Evaluation

A common context, an interesting new personal experience, the desire to communicate it to a personal friend, and the knowledge that the friend is doing something similar a few thousand miles away, are very powerful stimulants to encourage attempts at more adventurous use of a second language in discussion and written communication. Most of the children attempted to describe their feelings about the experience, rather than produce just a factual description of the visit.

Many of the benefits of free personal communication and of longer-term guided projects accrued, but the concentration of experience into a single event led to some of the best attempts at creative writing seen from these children.

Although such an activity can be developed into something larger and more involved, there is a positive value in such simple, limited projects and they can be undertaken with a group brought together on just the one occasion.

Contributors

Roger Livesey was a free-lance journalist for 30 years and an independent marketing consultant for 20 years before coming to Romania as a volunteer in early 1993. He teaches voluntarily at several schools in the town of Suceava and is the voluntary representative of World Youth Network, a charity based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Emanuela Tudoreanu is an English teacher at Group School No.1 in Suceava and assists Mr.Livesey voluntarily with e-mail projects at other schools.

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A VIRTUALLY MOTIVATING EXPERIENCE: AN E-MAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN STUDENTS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Context

The experiment described below is an e-mail exchange project which involved Japanese exchange students at Ohio University in the U.S. and Japanese students at Chubu University in Japan. This project would work well for false beginners through high intermediate level students of English as a second or foreign language.

Description

Two groups of students from Chubu University, Japan, were involved in keypal exchanges with each other. Group 1 consisted of 35 first year international studies students and Group 2 consisted of 15 international studies students and 15 engineering students who were attending Ohio University for two quarters on a study abroad program. Neither group had previously known each other or had had any familiarity with computers. In the beginning of the first semester, the students both in the U.S. and in Japan were given a few orientation sessions on how to use an e-mail system. For most of the students it was their first time to even touch a keyboard. Each student was matched with two students from the other group on a purely random basis. They were asked to exchange messages weekly on any topic of their interest.

At the beginning stage, only a few networked Macintosh computers were available for the students at Chubu University, and, due to bureaucracy, the computer center wouldn't let them send messages abroad. Therefore, the students were asked to write messages outside of class when they could find time and computers available and to mail them through a local network to their teacher, who had an access to the networked computer.

The information topics included popular music, sports, social life, academic courses, and personal matters. However, it seemed a number of students in Japan were interested in knowing about their keypals' life in the U.S. and those in the US about what was happening at their home university and in their home country. As the project developed, the students became so interested that some started to exchange two or three e-mail letters a week. A few students wrote messages almost everyday.

The exchanges on the Japan side took place on an Internet mailing list and hence were not private. Students sent and received e-mail helped by a software program called Eudora. The software automatically delivered the messages to the students' mailing list so that everyone registered for this project could read the messages. The software also automatically downloaded the messages into a mailbox for each student and had a variety of features like an automatic quote and a reply command. Although each message sent from the U.S. carried the names to whom the message was written, everyone was allowed to read and respond to the message he or she opened. This was so designed so that those who were motivated could write to more than two people and the teacher could monitor the exchanged messages. On the U.S. side, the students were assigned to go to a computer center at least once a week to read messages and respond directly to their keypals.

The project lasted for 15 weeks. When the exchange students came back from the US, the two groups met each other at a get-together party at Chubu University. The students enjoyed this chance to talk to their friends who they had previously only known through the computer screen.

Evaluation

According to the survey conducted after the project, we found that the project was accepted very positively by the participants in spite of the fact that we had several technical difficulties during the early stages. Four out of five students expressed that they wanted to continue the same kind of project (and we did in a different format). We also found that through this project our students became more interested in learning English and foreign cultures than before. They expressed that their overall English may not have changed noticeably by participating in this project, but their writing skills and willingness to express themselves in simple English had improved drastically. This was seen clearly in the increased length and number of messages they wrote towards the end of the project.

There were several difficulties and drawbacks as well. The participants lacked keyboard skills and there were very few computers available. Since the students had had no previous experience with the keyboard, writing messages on the computer screen was an incredibly time consuming process. Consequently, some students gave up and never wrote a message after the initial painful experience. Also, we had only two computers networked for 35 students at Chubu when this project started and, what was worse, these computers were available for students only from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, the participants somehow continued the project. This suggests that it is possible to start an e-mail project with a limited number of computers if we have some creativity and patience.

Other challenges resulted from the demanding schedule of U.S. college life and the incompatibility of Chubu's semester and Ohio University's quarter schedule. The participants at OU all wanted to exchange their messages more often and had the facilities to do so, but since they were so busy fulfilling other course requirements and this project was not evaluated, some unfortunately did not write as often as they wanted. If this project had been a part of the course work and been evaluated on some kind of basis, they might have written more frequently and have had longer messages. Furthermore, there was a week break at Ohio University in the beginning of June while the Chubu semester ran continuously through the end of July. An unexpected inconvenience occurred during this break, when the mailing system and the account given to each student from Ohio University were automatically changed. Thus, the teacher had to give another orientation session to familiarize the students with the new mailing system. During this lag time, the students at Chubu temporarily lost contact with their keypals but began actively exchanging messages with their classmates instead. They discussed boyfriends or girlfriends, weekend plans, and summer plans. This shift developed on its own without any type of teacher suggestion or intervention.

The last problem was a serious one. Some students complained that they never received messages back from their keypals and therefore they quit sending messages. It is very important to let the participants keep in mind that unless they send messages they will not get messages sent directly back to them. E-mailing is a two-way street and both sides should work equally hard.

From the survey, we also learned that direct personal messages were sent more frequently than we realized. The keypal exchanges took place in a list format originally and hence were not private, but the students figured out themselves how to send personal messages to their keypals directly off the list and they did so. Despite the fact that those students did not follow the directions we gave, we felt very pleased to know that the students were independently sending messages for communication purposes, which will eventually help them acquire the language.

To sum up, the project involved a lot of energy and time on both the part of the teachers and the students, but the rewards and benefits we received were far more than the trouble. We encourage the readers to start a similar project like ours.

Contributors

Mary MacDonald is Lecturer at Ohio Program of Intensive English at Ohio University. Tadashi Shiozawa and Shuji Ozeki are both Associate Professors at Chubu University in Japan. They are all editors of the Proceedings for FLEAT II '92 World Conference and are actively involved in promoting teaching English using networks.

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SHARING STORIES

RECIPES AND THEIR STORIES

Context

This is an annual project suitable for students of English as a second or foreign language at the beginning and intermediate levels.

Description

This project involves the sharing of recipes and stories via e-mail by students of English all over the world. Each year a call for recipes (see Appendix A) is placed on international e-mail networks. Teachers or students who are interested in participating fill out the registration form and send it in by e-mail. Then, individuals or groups write down and e-mail in recipes and accompanying stories. The story can be a memory associated with the recipe, the background of the recipe or just some thoughts on producing the recipe. The stories can be long or short (see the sample in Appendix B).

The beauty of this project is that it can be used to set the framework for a whole series of activities for ESL students. The following plan takes my students through planning the project, finding and preparing.

PRE-COOKING ACTIVITIES

1. Teacher brings in recipes for students to practice reading.
2. Students brainstorm real life benefits of project for students. (including, for example, the benefits of preserving family recipes, the pride of having work published, and the advantage of integrating math skills [measurements, fractions], science [nutrition], and English).
3. Establish student groups.
   - With a mixed language background class, divide students into groups of three to five of one language background.
   - With a single language background class, each student does one recipe.
4. Pre-plan for cooking.
   - Have groups (or individuals) list the name of the recipe along with ingredients.
   - Decide which groups will cook on each day.
   - Use butcher block paper to post ingredients along with names and dates.

COOKING

1. Plan equipment and site.
   - If kitchen not available, use coleman stove and bring cooking utensils.
   - Find a place to cook — outside the school is fine.

2. Assign jobs to students who are not cooking — rotate jobs daily.
    - A few are choppers.
    - A few are clean up.
    - A few are photographers.
    - A few are note takers.
    - A few are in charge of fire control.
    - The cooks are the supervisors.
3. Teacher's role is to help the notetakers get it all written down.

POST COOKING

1. Students type recipes into word processor using ASCII text. Do not format at this stage.
2. Students use spell check feature of software to correct spelling errors.
3. Divide students into recipe groups and have them check typed copy.
4. If masses of food have been prepared, students use math and cut the recipes down to 1/2 pound of meat per serving.

WRITING THE STORIES TO GO ALONG WITH THE RECIPES

Ss answer the following pre-writing questions:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your recipe?
3. What is the main ingredient?
4. Do you cook this recipe here the same way you did in your (house/country)?
5. When do you usually cook this recipe? (for non-natives)
6. Where did you get this recipe from? (for natives)
7. How do you feel when you cook this recipe? Why?

Note: For more advanced students use more structurally advanced questions.

Evaluation

For the students, this project builds their self esteem and develops multicultural ties. Many of the students' prejudicial stereotypes are dispelled when cooking and eating food from other countries. This camaraderie exists for the whole semester after doing this project. That is why it is done in the beginning of the year. Also seeing their recipe and story printed and published builds self esteem. Students proudly show off their work to their families, other students and guests or substitute teachers that come to our class during the year.

Contributor

Susan Gaer is an ESL instructor and media center coordinator at the Visalia Adult School in Visalia California.

This project is done every year. To receive information about the next cookbook project, please send e-mail to:

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Appendix A: Call for Recipes Sent out over E-mail

Recipes and their Stories 1994–1995

A project sponsored by America Online — Electronic Schoolhouse and the Scrapbook Exchange. Join with schools from around the world to produce our third Cookbook. We plan to publish before the end of the school year. The book will be about the foods which you and your students associate with particular holidays, or just special times. Recipes may be as simple or as complicated as you like, but they MUST be accompanied by the story or description that tells of the people, places, or occasion that make them special. Please include pictures and illustrations, as possible, and we will scan them into the desk-top published product.

APPENDIX B: A Sample Story Received via E-mail

For the Lahu harvest festival, we eat lots of food. One of our favorite foods is Okeh (pronounced OK). We eat Okeh all day at the festival. On the day of the harvest festival, the whole village gets up early and starts to cook at about 6 o'clock. Sometimes in Lahu culture the men cook. After cooking, we bring food to the leader's house. The oldest person in each family gathers together to do a blessing for the whole village. The blessing is to pray for a better harvest next year. After we pray, we eat. Then we have a song competition. The songs are about Lahu history from the beginning of time to now.

(To get the recipe for Okeh, you'll have to join the project!)

FOLKTALES AROUND THE WORLD

Context

This was an intergenerational project that involved intermediate English as a second language students from an adult school and native-English speaking pupils from a gifted-program in a nearby middle school. The project involved a combination of e-mail exchange and face-to-face visits. With some creativity, however, similar projects could be organized without the face-to-face meetings by using only e-mail, or a combination of e-mail and mailed audio-cassettes.

Description

The project involved the ESL adult students telling folktales from their countries to middle school students. The middle school students then used the stories to write and illustrate the folktales and presented books to the ESL students to take home and use with their children. Negotiation took place both in person and via e-mail.

As an adult school ESL teacher, I located a partner class of ESL students by contacting the school district librarian and asking for suggestions. After finding a partner, the process proceeded in five steps:

PREPARATION STAGE

Adult ESL students e-mailed letters of introduction and sent them via e-mail to the middle school students. The middle school students e-mailed back to the adult ESL students and asked them questions about their life histories. This helped the adult ESL students think about what stories they wanted to tell and also prepared them for the discussion at the upcoming introductory party (see below).

The adult ESL students were given a storytelling workshop by district librarian. At this workshop students learned about storyboarding, using gestures and props when telling stories. Simultaneously, the middle school students were learning about strategies for successful interaction with non-native speakers.

INTRODUCTORY PARTY

The two classes met at an introductory party at the middle school. The middle school students asked prepared questions to the adult ESL students.

PREPARING THE STORIES

The adult ESL students decided on their stories and practiced telling their stories to other students and teachers at the adult school. They also read American folktales, including Little Red Riding Hood, The Emperor's New Clothes, The Three Little Bears, and Cinderella.

The middle school students read and discussed fairy tales from other countries such as Russia, Africa, and Mexico.

STORY TELLING PARTY

Both classes met again, one week after the introductory party. At this party, groups of four adult ESL students told their folk tales to groups of four middle school students. The middle school students were responsible for writing down the stories and asking clarification questions when there was a gap in understanding.

WRITING UP THE STORY

After the storytelling, the middle school students were in charge of writing and illustrating the stories. After a draft was written, the middle school student e-mailed it to be checked by the adult ESL students for accuracy. The draft was then e-mailed back and forth until both parties agreed that it was finished. Illustrations were sent by fax or snail mail (regular post). We are hoping to publish this work with Josten's publishing company. If this doesn 't work out however, we will use Pagemaker and self-publish the material.

VARIATIONS

For language teachers that do not have nearby classes of native speakers, similar types of exchanges could take place with parties being held on a MOO instead of in person. Roles can be reversed, with language students writing down stories of native speakers, perhaps interviewing senior citizens. Where facilities exist, illustrations can be shared by scanning and sending them electronically, thus helping participating students develop more technological skills. Finally, stories can be published on the World Wide Web to help achieve a broader sense of audience.

Evaluation

ESL students need to be well prepared for the initial interaction with middle school students. In this initial project they practiced daily for two weeks prior to the actual storytelling. Stories that the ESL students told were folktales told to them by their parents. Some of the benefits that I observed from this project included increased self esteem levels by the ESL students. Half of the ESL class did not show up for the introductory party because they were afraid. The first meeting was so successful however, that at the next meeting, all the students showed up, including some I hadn't seen for a few months!

The ESL students felt flattered and respected by the middle school students. Their English was being used for a real purpose and they practiced the stories with out any pressure from the instructor. The middle school students are at a crucial stage of their social development and the benefits of having learned more about cultural groups they would normally never come in contact with will hopefully stay with them for most of their lives. The final and most lasting benefit comes from the fact that the ESL students will have written down stories that most ordinarily would be lost through the generations.

Contributor

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Appendix: A sample story told by a student from Laos

HMONG TALE

Once upon a time in Laos there lived two people who were very much in love. Their names were Tongni and Saemi. The young 16-year-old couple wanted desperately to get married. The only thing standing in the way of they couple's happiness was Tongni's parents strong disapproval of Saemi. Tongni's parents refused to let their beloved son marry her because she was from a Hmong clan different from their own.

Tongni's love for Saemi was so great that he died of a broken heart. He could not accept the fact that he would never be able to marry his true love, unless his parents changed their minds about her. Saemi sang mournful songs expressing her feelings about how she had no place to go and how she didn't know what to do now that she must live without her only true love. After Tongni was buried, Saemi went to see him. She couldn't see him while he was being buried because in the Hmong custom, it is wrong for the women to see the burial.

For seven days Saemi took rice, chicken, and pies to Tongni's house. At his house, Saemi cried and called frantically for him to wake up. She did this six times and still he did not wake up. But the seventh time she called him, Tongni rose from the dead and Saemi was overwhelmed with joy.

The couple went to Tongni's house and begged his parents approval of their marriage. They reminded his parents that Saemi had proved faithful to Tongni by waking him up. His parents were pleased that their son was finally getting married. At Tongni and Saemi's joyful wedding, they received beautiful new clothes and had a lot of fun. The wedding was very festive with many joyful people. Tongni and Saemi rejoiced their life together and lived happily ever after.

GLOBAL STORIES:
USING E-MAIL TEXTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Context

This project was carried out in schools across the world, but the development of the global stories into classroom activities was done by student teachers at the University of Oldenburg. The original project started with some questions about language teaching and asked pupils to write a short story. The stories were then sent to all the project partners through e-mail carbon copies.

Pupils in the project were aged between 9 and 18 years old; some of the stories were made up specially for this work, others were traditional stories from the region. Most of the stories were in English, but some were written in local dialect too and one came through in English and Xhosa (an African language).

Description

To set up a project like this the first thing you need is a good idea — something that would be of interest to teachers and pupils in your own and other countries. The Global Stories project was interesting because it included multi-cultural and historical ideas as well as the opportunity for pupils to create their own stories. Children were also interested in reading stories from other countries. Your project might cover global topics like environment, language learning, mathematics, science, or history.

Then you need to find others who wish to join your project. One easy way to do this is by joining a listserv, like *iecc-projects*. You can do this by sending e-mail to:
iecc-projects-request@stolaf.edu
In the message field write: *subscribe*

You also need to tell participants how to send in and receive the texts. This was done in the Global Stories project through me; teachers sent me the stories and I then sent them out on BT Campus2000 system using carbon copies and through the Internet with a distribution list. Alternatively, you could set up a distribution system through a listserv of your own, if you have a friendly service provider who will help you. You can even distribute through the World Wide Web, if you have a home page. The WWW will also let you enhance your project with pictures, photos, or other graphics. You might want your project to operate in one or several languages.

How you should use the texts in your classroom depends on the age group you work with and their language ability. In the Global Stories project, teachers and student-teachers used the texts in a variety of ways, such as printing them out in large sized fonts for a wall display, or using them in home-made class readers with comprehension exercises and questions. They cooperated with art teachers to make illustrated home-made books and even with a publisher to produce a commercial book (Rosengart, 1994). Some instructors had students prepare cartoons to retell the stories. Others cut the stories into smaller chunks and asked pupils to rearrange them so that they make grammatical and communicative sense. Cloze procedure techniques where words such as prepositions, nouns, or main verbs could be omitted provided a way to get students to test their knowledge of grammatical rules. Some instructors explored the cultural aspects of some of the stories with ideas like making a poster incorporating the story, information about the country of origin, and its people. Some schools in the UK and USA incorporated the stories into newsletters for students, parents and the local community.

One story, An Iron Bar Into a Needle, was a moral tale from China about the virtue of perseverance. It was adapted and rewritten into contexts from different countries and time periods. Other traditional stories or fairy tales, such as Little Red Riding Hood, could be rewritten by pupils into their own way of speaking and adapted to the settings found in their own region of the Earth.

Evaluation

The Global Stories idea was linked with a research project which examined the views of teachers and pupils in German schools about the use of e-mail in teaching English as a foreign language. The results showed an increase in motivation among pupils when dealing with authentic material in language classes. Grammar did not appear to be a major concern in such projects, although pupils did seem to try harder to ensure that they could communicate their meaning as clearly as possible.

These activities were intended not only to help teachers, but to bring a sense of fun into the foreign language classroom, both for the teachers and the students.

Reference

Rosengart, T (1994) *Folk Tales from around the World*. Santa Barbara, CA: The Learning Works, Inc.

Contributor

John Meadows has previously taught in primary schools in London and is now involved in telecommunication projects and research, and instructing student teachers. He acts as international educational consultant to British Telecom/Campus 2000.

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INTERCULTURAL KEYPAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Context

This activity is suitable for ESL students of any age or level.

Description

This oral history project is meant to further four goals using the medium of telecommunications in the classroom. First, it is meant to demystify telecommunications by getting students to actually use it, thereby thinking of it as simply an additional means of communication. Second, it is to give students a real-life situation in which to use their second language as a necessary link to communicating with others who do not speak their own native language. Third, this project should give students a framework that will cause them to communicate with their parents/relatives in their native language, learning family histories and family lore. And fourth, this project is meant to give students the experience and practice of translating family oral histories into English to be shared with their electronic penpals (keypals).

The structure of this project will necessitate collaboration on the part of the two teachers of the classes who will participate. This will include agreeing upon due dates for the different stages of the project.

Teachers can find collaborators by posting e-mail invitations on a number of services that provide a means for bringing classes together:

InClass:
    inclass@schoolnet.carleton.ca
The Electronic Schoolhouse section of America Online
Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections:
    iecc-requests@stolaf.edu

Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections can also be reached on the World Wide Web at URL: *http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/*

The invitation should include the contextual information such as the desired age group and level of English. Because of the translation involved, this project would not be appropriate for beginning ESL students, but would be appropriate for those at intermediate or advanced levels.

Through these e-mail invitations, teachers come into contact with each other, confirm a mutual interest in each other's students' cultures, and agree to a projected time-frame.

In class, students devise an oral history questionnaire, the focus of which is to get keypals to discuss their parents' and relatives' backgrounds as they relate to culture. Questions should be open-ended, leading to everything from reminiscences of life when respondents were the students' age, to tales of unforgettable family figures. Teachers might suggest a couple of sample questions (e.g., What kinds of sports did you play when you were my age? Which relative do you remember the most from your childhood?) Teachers should be careful thought not to feed too many questions to students.

Questionnaires are exchanged with the participating class using e-mail. The receiving class makes suggestions for revisions, and e-mails the questionnaire back. A final version of the questionnaire is agreed upon, using perhaps five questions from each class, and making a total of ten questions.

Instruct students to take the printed questionnaires home and complete the interviews in their native languages. Emphasize that an important element of the project is the process of translating the questions and responses. They need not write down every word in the response, just the important points.

The students edit and translate answers to the questionnaires into English, inputting responses into text files on classroom computers. Then students return translated questionnaires via e-mail. The receiving classes download their keypals' questionnaires, and the teacher distributes hard copies of individual questionnaires to individual students.

Students first share their keypal's questionnaire with a class partner, and then share it with the entire class. After reading, sharing, and discussing the above questionnaires, individual students write back to their keypals, taking care to comment on what impressed them and on what they learned. E-mail communication continues on an individual basis, with each participant certainly having a much deeper understanding of their keypal than they had before the project.

Evaluation

The benefits of this project are many. Students use the simplest of online communications, e-mail, in a way that does not put technology on center stage; it simply becomes the most efficient medium for the exchange of information between students of different backgrounds. More importantly, it provides a vehicle to get students to engage in meaningful conversations about their parents and relatives. The core of this project is to assist students in improving their language acquisition skills through a natural, real-life setting. In order for the project to be successful, the goal of communicating with keypals in English must always be apparent. Toward this goal, timelines must be adhered to, and collaborating teachers should keep in frequent communication through e-mail for the duration of the project.

Contributor

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EXCHANGING SUPERSTITIONS FOR WRITING FLUENCY

Context

This e-mail pen pal exchange between two groups of adult ESL students at two different North American universities was initiated to help students develop writing fluency and skills through interaction with a real audience. The exchange was arranged as part of the writing component of a 12-week intensive program, which offered five hours of classes a day, each focusing on either listening, speaking, reading, writing, or grammar. The aim of the writing component, which was based on a process approach to writing, was to enable students to develop writing skills for non-academic purposes, especially narrative and descriptive writing.

The students in the two groups involved were at the high beginner level, between 18 and 58 years old (average 23 years) and had varied language and educational backgrounds, ranging from pre-university to fully trained and experienced professionals (lawyers, physicians, business people).

Description

The students in this e-mail project were expected to discuss superstitions and good/bad luck symbols in order to produce a class publication of "Superstitions around the World". This topic, which seemed to fascinate students in a previous course, was expected to focus them on content and the development of writing fluency. However, students were free to explore other topics they considered interesting.

There were two main parts to the writing component:

- Writing workshops provided an opportunity to review sentence and paragraph structure and consider characteristics of narration and description through examples, pre-writing activities, one or more draft versions, and group discussions. They also enabled students to explore writers' and readers' expectations through discussion of their own and their pen pal's writing.
- E-mail letters and messages written to their pen pals, which students composed during workshops or during independent study hours. Students could incorporate text prepared during their writing workshops or produce new text, but they were asked to remember to collect material for the publication.

Over the 12-week period, students wrote a minimum of ten first drafts, some of them related to superstitions and good/bad luck symbols, others on topics they selected, during writing workshops. They were free to select which of their first drafts they wanted to develop further (i.e., write subsequent drafts, solicit peer feedback), but were required to keep copies of all their work in a writing folder.

Writing workshops during the initial part of the course focused on writing letters of introduction that students could send to their e-mail pen pal to become familiar with each others background. In subsequent exchanges they described superstitions or good/bad luck symbols from their own culture and responded to material from their pen pals. Writers were often asked to provide more detailed descriptions of their customs or definitions of vocabulary items, which encouraged many of them to consult with class members of similar background or to go to the library or other sources of information to provide satisfactory answers to questions from their pen pals.

One writing workshop each week was reserved to give students time to discuss superstitions and good/bad luck symbols they had become aware of through their pen pals and to select their favourite ones for the final publication. These were compiled by the students, and through desktop publishing software, turned into their final publication complete with student generated illustrations and a glossary of vocabulary items. The students initiated and added an unplanned section which included the names and address of all the contributors so that contact could be maintained. In this way, for some at least, the exchange continues.

SAMPLE EXCHANGES

A French Canadian student had written to her pen pal describing superstitions involving the number "13". Her Taiwanese pen pal wrote back, telling her about the comparable status of the number "4" in his culture. He went on to explain that this was because the word for "4" sounds very similar to the word for "death" in his language and asked his French Canadian pen pal to explain the reason for the perceived "fear of number 13". After much discussion amongst her friends, no satisfactory explanation emerged and she went to the library to do some research on the topic.

In another exchange, a Chinese student wrote that older relatives always told her to eat up every grain of rice on her plate as she was growing up. Not eating up meant that a young girl would have to marry a man with pock marks on his face. In response, her pen pal, a German student, wanted to know why marrying a man with pock marks was considered to be a problem.

Evaluation

The students were pleased with the e-mail exchange and proud of their final publication. Although most of them found it very difficult to write at first, they soon stopped worrying about mistakes and focused on giving and receiving information. Most of them commented on the positive attitude they developed towards writing, which they claimed was possible because they were writing to a real person and the responses from their pen pals arrived quickly. They also commented favourably on the workshop format, which provided them with a lot of support and encouragement from members of their own class. The students credited the topic for giving them a new appreciation of different cultures and considered it a good choice, but felt that in future courses students should be allowed to produce several publications on different topics. Students especially liked the idea of producing their own publications to take with them at the end of the course.

The instructors agreed that the students' writing fluency increased considerably throughout the course. They observed that the group discussions of exchanges individual students received from their pen pals encouraged improved comprehensibility and accuracy, although these did not emerge as quickly as fluency. Also, they noted that the course format facilitated cooperative and self-directed learning.

Contributor

Dr. Hedy McGarrell, an Associate Professor at Brock University, Canada, is currently a Visiting Senior Fellow at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, in Singapore. She lectures in linguistics, language acquisition, and language teaching methodology and coordinates the ESL writing and grammar courses offered at Brock University.

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SWAHILI-L:
AN INTERNET MODEL FOR LESS COMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES

Context

The experience of the past three years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison suggests that computer networking can be a powerful pedagogical tool for supplementing Swahili instruction at the collegiate level. As increasing numbers of high schools connect to the Internet, this technology will become a critical feature of the foreign language learning process, especially in the study of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs).

Description

Swahili-L is an Internet distribution list service for multi-address mailings commonly known as a listserver. As such, Swahili-L currently serves a world-wide constituency of over 200 subscribers who write their messages only in the target language: Swahili (Kiswahili). This service promotes Swahili among adults (particularly at U.S. African Studies Centers); scholars of Swahili in North America, Europe, and Asia; and employees of government and private voluntary organizations in East Africa. Swahili-L provides authentic materials for supplementing in-class instruction as well as for individual benefits.

New subscribers request a subscription directly from the automated software server maintained by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Only this initial request is written in English and only because the software is designed in English.

To subscribe to Swahili-L send a message to:
listserver@relay.doi t.wisc.edu

In the message field write:
subscribe Swahili-L

After you are subscribed all further messages should be written in Swahili and sent directly to the Swahili-L account at: *swahili-l@relay.doit.wisc.edu*

The value of the Swahili-L service for teaching practical, functional literacy thus has several useful models as precedents for both teachers and students. Therefore, subscribers can develop, maintain, and improve their recursive skills: reading and writing.

Different strategies for reading exist for the casual subscriber of Swahili-L. In a learner-centered situation, the subscriber may select one of several strategies for decoding the text. Four levels of reading apply to language messages via the computer: mechanical (no comprehension), superficial (focus on syntax), interested (understanding of text), and omniscient (understanding of text and intent of author). Often a novice reader may gain comprehension by the form of the message, possible cognate words, or words written in English. As the motivation level increases and the interest in the text becomes more compelling, readers may focus on syntax and grammar or general comprehension. Superior readers and those familiar with the cultural heritage of the writer may obtain further understanding of the message by the presence or absence of words, style, and form.

Reading can be done in several ways. Some subscribers read the messages directly from the screen as they come in. Others may collect messages in an automated digest service and read groups of messages collected over a period of time. Readers can always reread messages at any time since the listserver provides an archiving feature. Frequently, new subscribers to Swahili-L spend a few days reading messages to familiarize themselves with the flow of the contents and the length of messages before they post a message.

Writing requires active, creative participation. To categorize a writer's ability, foreign language teachers have developed guidelines for writing output. A writer at the novice level can post a message that contains lists of words. Likewise, an educated native writer (e.g., a scholar of Swahili literature) may also submit a message containing lists of words and phrases also characteristic of novice writing. Because of the anonymity of this service, few readers will know the actual writing proficiency level of the author. Swahili-L, like other language listservers, provides the freedom for novice and educated native writers to still communicate with various levels of readers.

Listservers provide two alternatives for technically producing and transmitting written text. Subscribers can write a message online when connected to Swahili-L, encouraging interactive communication; or, they can write a message on a diskette prior to logging on, up-load it to the system, and then send the text file to Swahili-L. The latter technique may result in less language errors and more comprehensive editing. Although a spell-checker in Swahili is not available, the African Studies Program at Yale University has created an online dictionary service. Some writers may follow a formal, prescribed and controlled style typical of the grammar translation method of language learning. In contrast, some subscribers may use an expressive approach that focuses on creative messages rather than the form.

The types of texts, of course, are infinite, and include scholarly papers, penpal communications, book reviews, announcements, and on-location news. The poem below is an example of superior writing (ACTFL level) that conveys a point of view on an abstract topic. This message describes and pokes fun at the damage bugs can cause listservers.

```
Date: Fri, 25 Sept 92 19:16:10 EDT
Subject: Kunguni Wavuni
To: swahili-l@macc.wisc.edu
Kunguni Wavuni
Najitokeza wavuni * hadithi kusimulia
Ni kituko cha kunguni * mitambo kuingilia
Kisa hicho sikubuni * maapa kwa Bibilia
Dudu liloshambulia * twaambiwa ni kunguni....
(Mgeni Mtunga Guni)
```

An East African subscriber posted a message that illustrated an advanced proficiency. Although this writer could have written a paragraph, he chose to write one complex sentence. This message informed Swahili-L readers that the Ugandan parliament had voted to make Swahili an official language.

```
To: Multiple recipients of <swahili-l@relay.adp.wisc.edu>
Subject: Kiswahili Uganda
Time: 17-Oct-1994 22:33:00.12
Ndugu,
Nimesoma sasa hivi habari ya kuwa Bunge la Uganda limepiga kura
na kuamua kuwa Kiswahili kiwe lugha ya Taifa na lugha rasmi.
```

In order to maintain a free flow of messages, each writer must prepare the message clearly. Often a graphic attracts the casual reader's attention.

Error correction is a major concern for instructors of reader and writers. Some instructors do not want their beginning students to see any errors or dialectical differences, while other instructors do not want their students to post messages that might reflect poorly on them as instructors. Consequently, not all students of Swahili have the benefit of this service.

Several methods of error correction are available to writers. Few writers are concerned with correcting less proficient writers. Rather, a common technique of superior writers is to reply to a previous message by correcting the grammar or vocabulary errors within the response. Another form of correction results when a subscriber posts a message in English, and is then reminded by others to post in Swahili.

Subscribers, regardless of their writing proficiency, may hesitate to write additional messages if their original message is criticized. Replying sensitively is a critical issue for language listservers in strengthening the literacy of beginning writers.

Evaluation

Swahili-L is perhaps the first, electronic-communication service that exists for any African language. During its short existence, it has seen steady increase in the number of subscribers from around the world. Subscribers include novice students, students seeking to reinforce and maintain their competency in the language, and first-language speakers from East Africa.

The Swahili-L experience offers an efficacious model for teaching reading and writing skills for real communication in other African languages such as Afrikaans, Arabic, Amharic, Bamana, Hausa, Lingala, Shona, Wolof, Yoruba, and Zulu. Meanwhile, Swahili-L should be maintained and promoted for all levels of literacy.

Contributor

As outreach director for the African Studies Program, Kuntz (Ph.D., Wisconsin) researches U.S. African language instruction.

Memberships: AATA, AAUSC, ACTFL, AERA, ALA, ALTA, ASA, CALICO, IS, WAFLT, WCSS.

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THE GAKUSEI LISTS:
E-MAIL DISCUSSION LISTS FOR STUDENTS OF JAPANESE

Context

This is a newly formed group of lists for students of Japanese as a foreign or second language.

Description

There are now three GAKUSEI-L lists organized by level:

GAKUSEI-L	for beginning to low intermediate students (1st year to 2nd year of study)
GAKUSEI2-L	for mid intermediate to high intermediate students (2nd and 3rd year of study)
GAKUSEI3-L	for advanced students (3rd and 4th year and beyond)

These lists were established to provide students with a forum to practice writing and talking with other students of Japanese throughout the world in romanized Japanese. As the lists develop, other lists for authentic Japanese orthography E-mail as well as lists on various topics will be established.

Students and other non-native speakers of Japanese can subscribe to the lists. (Native speakers of Japanese are also welcome to join the lists, though they are asked to first contact the list owner to receive guidelines for native speakers.) New participants are urged to subscribe to more than one list to read messages and see which list is appropriate to their level. Subscribers can then post an introductory message. Introductory messages as well as subsequent messages may consist of a few simple sentences to several paragraphs, depending on the ability of the subscriber and the list he or she belongs to.

Messages average anywhere from a few a week to several messages a day. Topics currently being discussed on all three lists range from manga, movies, and food, to Japanese perception of foreigners' Japanese speech. Subscribers who are stumped on what and how to write can also receive tips from the list owner on strategies for writing and reading messages.

Teachers interested in using these lists for class projects are also welcomed to subscribe along with their students. As more teachers show an interest in using the GAKUSEI lists, a discussion list for teachers (SENSEI-L) will be established in which teachers can exchange ideas on projects.

Evaluation

GAKUSEI-L was started in March 1995 and within one week, subscribers numbered over 150 with addresses from 15 countries. Messages in the very beginning were from people highly proficient in Japanese; thus GAKUSEI2-L and GAKUSEI3-L were formed. As of this writing, the three lists have more than 400 members from some 20 countries.

From personal messages that the list owner has received from subscribers, it is evident that students have been looking for a list like this to practice their Japanese for quite some time. Meanwhile, even subscribers who are at the beginning and low-intermediate levels of Japanese have reported that they have gained confidence in expressing themselves in writing since joining the lists and that they want to learn more from their classes.

Contributor

Laura Kimoto has taught Japanese at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo for the past six years. She is also the founder and owner of the GAKUSEI Lists which are discussion lists for students of Japanese to communicate with each other world-wide.

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Appendix A: Subscribing to GAKUSEI-L

To receive further information on this project contact Laura Kimoto:
kimotol@hawaii.edu

To subscribe, send a message to:
listproc@hawaii.edu

In the message field write:
subscribe LISTNAME Yourfirstname Yourlastname

(Where *LISTNAME* is replaced by the name of the list you are subscribing to and *Yourfirstname Yourlastname* is replaced by your own first name and last name.)

Appendix B: Sample Messages from the GAKUSEI Lists

SAMPLE MESSAGE FROM GAKUSEI-L

> "EG desu. Watashi-no uchi wa Boston, Massachusetts ni arismas. Watashi-no shushin wa Honolulu, Hawai'i desu. Nihongo ga chotto hanashimas."

Translation:

"I am EG. My house is in Boston, Massachusetts. I am from Honolulu, Hawai'i. I speak a little Japanese."

SAMPLE MESSAGE FROM GAKUSEI2-L

"N-san, Hiroshima no dono hen ni sunde irrashaimasu ka?. Watashi mo san nen mai Hiroshima no Minami machi 5-chome no chikaku ni sunde itte, Hoeken to iu kenkyuujo de hataraite orimashita."

Translation:

"N, in what part of Hiroshima do you live? Three years ago I lived near 5-chome Minami machi in Hiroshima and worked at a research laboratory called Hoeken."

SAMPLE MESSAGE FROM GAKUSEI3-L

"Haikei. Shundan no orikara, "Gakusei-l" no kakui-onchuu wa go-sooken ni o-sugoshi no koto to zonjimasu. Watakushi mo buji ni kurashite orimasu node, go-anshin kudasaimasu yoo ni o-negai mooshiagemasu. Sate, jikoshookai sasete itadakimasu. Watakushi wa WM to mooshimashite, Y-shuu no saidai no shima ni aru X Daigaku ni zaigaku shite ori, Nihon bungaku wo senkoo shite orimasu. Nihongo no hoogen nimo kyoomi wo motte orimasu node, hoogengaku to kankei aru kenkyuu wo shibashiba itashimasu. Ryuukyuu-go (tsumari Okinawa-ben) to Kansai-hoomen no hoogen no kenkyuu wo shita koto ga arimasu..."

Translation:

"I am sure that the subscribers of this list are in good health. I am living safely so I humbly ask that you set your minds at ease. Well, allow me to introduce myself. I go by the name of WM and I belong to X school located in Y state. I am majoring in Japanese Literature. I also am interested in the study of Japanese Dialects and have done a bit of research in that field. I have done research in the Ryuukyuuan language (in other words, the Okinawan dialect) and research in the dialects of the Kansai area of Japan..."

RIBO-L:
A GERMAN-ENGLISH BILINGUAL ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION FORUM

Context

RIBO-L is designed for post secondary speakers, students and teachers of German and English. It is open to anyone interested in participating in discussions conducted in German or English on a variety of issues. RIBO-L is linked to the International E-mail Tandem Network. It was founded in the summer of 1992 through joint efforts by the University of Rhode Island (USA) and the Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Germany); hence the name RIBO-L.

Description

The activities on RIBO-L consist of three major categories: letters of introduction by new subscribers, queries, and discussion topics.

As recommended in the detailed bilingual welcome message, most new subscribers introduce themselves on the discussion forum in either their native or target language. Some provide introductions in both languages. The forum sees a steady stream of newcomers. Many — but by no means all — subscribers are post secondary students from various disciplines, primarily at European and North American universities. What brings them together is a shared interest in the languages and the cultures of German and English speaking countries. In follow-ups to the introductions, subscribers post messages of general interest to the list, but also find correspondence partners with whom they then write on a one-on-one basis.

Queries or information questions are a common activity on RIBO-L. They fall into two groups: practical questions as they relate to the countries involved (mainly Germany and the U.S.), and language related queries. Actual examples of the former include: A North American student planning to study in a German-speaking country and inquires about language programs and the application process to universities. A German student is planning a trip through the U.S. and asks about inexpensive accommodations in a particular area. A Canadian student is planning a trip through Germany and asks if train information is available via the Internet.

Language related questions are very common. For example, someone asked how to express the English word 'lounge' in German. This resulted in detailed U.S.— German cross-cultural comparisons of the concept of 'lounge' as well as the various meanings of 'lounge' in many of the English-speaking countries of subscribers, including Australia, Canada and Great Britain. Occasionally subscribers venture into topics comparing various structures of German and English.

The third major form of forum activity are discussion topics. These can be suggested by any list member. In the past, the two list-coordinators in Rhode Island and Bochum have solicited suggestions for discussion topics twice a year. These were then posted in two to three week intervals. In the three years since its inception a variety of cultural, social, economic, and political topics have been discussed on the forum. The list coordinators have found that topics which lend themselves to cross-cultural comparisons tend to be the most fruitful. Past topics discussed on RIBO-L include the role of the media in today's society, violence among youth, health care reform, children's books, environmental issues and recycling, elections, and friendship and marriage.

RIBO-L currently has approximately 500 subscribers in 17 countries. Countries with more than 10 subscribers are, in descending order: USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia. RIBO-L is active year-round, although there are peak times and times with less activity due to the quite different semester schedules in the various countries. The 'traffic' on RIBO-L is generally between two and six messages per day.

In order to subscribe to RIBO-L, send a message to:
listserv@uriacc.uri.edu

In the body of the message write:
SUB RIBO-L Yourfirstname Yourlastname

Evaluation

The results of the first three years have been positive. List subscribers have commented on the unique opportunities a bilingual forum provides. The coordinators believe that the contributions on this forum should be by subscribers and for subscribers. Consequently they interfere only minimally, stepping in only when the language balance between German and English is not maintained or when subscribers repeatedly violate generally accepted rules of netiquette.

Contributor

Norbert Hedderich is an assistant professor of German at the University of Rhode Island. His areas of specialization are methods of teaching foreign languages and educational technology.

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CAUSERIE: A CAFE CAMPUS IN FRENCH

Context

This international discussion list is suitable for speakers and learners of French at the intermediate level or above.

Description

Causerie is an Internet discussion list, began in February 1992, out of the University of Quebec. Its moderator, Pierre-J. Hamel, is a poet who prefers to call himself a "concierge/deneigeur" (caretaker/snow or static remover).

- Pour jaser, parloter, palabrer: *Causerie@UQuebec.ca*
- En francais, un "Cafe Campus" pour discuter de choses et d'autres.

The list has a membership fluctuating between 300 and 400 and spreading across four continents, but Canadians, Americans and French dominate. It can best be described as a meeting ground of francophones and francophiles.

The level of tolerance on the list is exemplary. From the beginning, members have refused to deal with language deviation, ignoring newcomers' pleas to have their grammar corrected, and reassuring them that they are indeed quite understandable. The occasional visiting purist is dispatched with humour.

The level of language ranges from barely intermediate to sophisticated native use, including very contemporary slang. Through some kind of linguistic miracle, everyone adjusts to the wildly disparate levels: basic greetings are sent to novices acknowledging their presence and convoluted arguments are carried on among those whose language mastery permits it.

Flames are unusually rare. While the list is not designed as a pedagogical entity for the practice of French language skills, that is in effect a consequence. Yet its most important function is to bring together the francophones and allow francophiles to participate. The list has had threads dealing with many comparative civilization topics:

> How do Americans perceive France?
>
> How do the French perceive Americans or North Americans?
>
> How do the varied citoyens perceive cinema, art, music?
>
> What's going on in Quebec regarding separation?
>
> How do the Swiss (or Belgians, or Louisiannais, or Quebecois, or Franco-Americans) deal with cultural survival?

In terms of literature, les Causeriennes discuss their likes and dislikes, ask for good references for contemporary reading materials, and report back on their reactions to readings they were directed to through the list. Between these weighty topics, one can count on exchanges of puns, jokes, WWW-sites, and information on Minitel access (the national electronic information service in France). Une vraie causerie, quoi.

Evaluation

Every once in a while, a French teacher will discover Causerie and push his or her students on to it, resulting in multiple messages of the type:

```
Hi,
I'm XXX, and I'm learning French and I would like to talk to you.
Write to me!
```

This is perhaps not the best use of the medium, but 'the Cause' takes it all in good stride. Someone always speaks up to welcome the class members, who tend to fade away given the volume of messages. Causerie was not set up as a pedagogic tool, but certainly can serve that function well.

If, however, Causerie is viewed as a cafe where one interacts in a natural fashion with francophones and francophiles from around the world, it can be a wonderful place to practice and learn language while having an enjoyable and interesting time.

Contributor

Dana Paramskas is professor of French at the University of Guelph. She is the co-author of several CALL programs and one interactive video-disk. Her research interests include technology for language learning, CALL, and most recently, CMC.

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APPENDIX: Subscribing to Le Causerie

Pour s'abonner a ce nouveau repertoire, il suffit d'envoyer a l'adresse:
ListServer@UQuebec.ca

la commande:
*Sub Causerie **Prenom Nom***
(*PRENOM* est remplacee par vortre prenom et *NOM* est remplacee par votre nom)

To subscribe to this new list send an e-mail message to:
ListServer@UQuebec.ca
In the message field write:
*Sub Causerie **Yourfirstname Yourlastname***

Et puis on pourra causer ensemble!

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT E-MAIL DISCUSSION LISTS

Context

This is an ongoing project available to any post-secondary (college, university, adult ed, vocational ed) students of English as a second or foreign language at any level.

Description

Nine international e-mail discussion lists have been set up for ESL and EFL college students around the world to communicate with each other and practice their English. Two are general discussion lists organized by level and the remainder are organized by topic. The lists are:

CHAT-SL	General Discussion List (Low level)
DISCUSS-SL	General Discussion List (High level)
BUSINESS-SL	Business & Economics
ENGL-SL	Learning English
EVENT-SL	Current Events
MOVIE-SL	Cinema
MUSIC-SL	Music
SCITECH-SL	Science, Technology, & Computers
SPORT-SL	Sports

The lists work in the following manner: The teacher first registers her class for the project (see contact information below). Then the students subscribe to the list(s) they are interested in and participate in discussions. Students may read messages only, write messages to the whole list, or also correspond privately to other students they meet on the list. Students may work on the lists on their own time at a computer lab or from home, but most teachers find that the project works best if the students are first brought to a computer lab one or more times to learn about the lists and how to use them. All the lists are also assisted by teacher monitors who help students with problems or stimulate discussion during slow periods.

These "SL" Student Lists are based at La Trobe University in Melbourne and first started in February 1994. There are currently 2000+ subscribers from 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and Latin America. Traffic on each list usually ranges from a few messages a week to several messages a day. CHAT-SL and DISCUSS-SL are the two most popular lists, with about 8–10 messages per day.

While the majority of participants on the lists are ESL and EFL students, teachers and some native English-speaking students (usually by special arrangement) also participate on some of the lists, thus providing extra practice opportunities for more advanced students.

Discussion on the lists is remarkably varied. Recent discussions have featured the ten greatest rock groups of all time (MUSIC-SL), techniques for using the World Wide Web (SCITECH-SL), what constitutes a sentence fragment (ENGL-SL), the U.S. embargo of Cuba (DISCUSS-SL), and a virtual picnic (CHAT-SL).

Finally, another feature of the Student List Project is an electronic news magazine called Wings. Wings features articles contributed by students participating in the project, and is edited by a team of devoted student editors. Wings is currently sent out to all participating students via e-mail; plans are underway to publish it on the World Wide Web.

Evaluation

According to a survey conducted last year, 83% of responding students have found this a good way to practice their English. One student wrote, "When I started 8 months ago, I was ashamed of sending a simple message to a fellow student and it usually took me about an hour to compose a few sentence letter. Now it takes me a great deal of energy to stay away from the Internet." Other students have commented on the value of having a real audience for their writing, making new friends, and learning about different cultures.

Most teachers have found that the lists work best for their classes if the students are given some kind of concrete assignment, such as, for example, posting at least one message a week and writing a report on the list at the end of the semester. Teachers involved in the project discuss these and other ideas on a special teachers' list called TCHR-SL. All teachers registering their class are placed on TCHR-SL and also are sent special suggestions and guidelines for using the lists with their classes.

Contributor

Mark Warschauer is a researcher at the National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Hawai'i. He is a co-founder of the Student List project.

Mark Warschauer
markw@hawaii.edu

Appendix: More Information

To receive further information on all aspects of this project, including how to register your students, send a blank e-mail message to:
announce-sl@latrobe.edu.au

Questions may also be directed to any of the three co-owners:

Lloyd Holliday, La Trobe University, Australia
L.Holliday@latrobe.edu.au

Thomas Robb, Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan
trobb@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp

Mark Warschauer, University of Hawai'i
markw@hawaii.edu

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LISTS:
INTRODUCING THE GENERAL EFL CLASS TO THE NET

Context

This activity was used with university students of English as a foreign language.

Description

In the Fall 1994 semester, I decided to try to get my students involved in the Internet as a teaching and learning tool. The students were studying English as a foreign language in order to fulfill requirements of their Masters studies at the American University in Cairo and comprised two course sections: There were 11 students in the advanced section and 11 in the intermediate. Ten were enrolled in the Management department, five in Mass Communications, two in Political Science, one in Computer Science, one in Islamic Art and Architecture, one in Construction Engineering, and one in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language.

The classes met for two and a half hours per day (excluding breaks), five days a week for 16 weeks. A general syllabus which included very specific departmental goals and objectives had to be met to prepare students for the end-of-term prochievement examination.

In selecting an Internet project, an important consideration was the limited access and minimal facilities available. Although our new computer-assisted language learning (CALL) lab was functioning, it had not yet been connected to the Internet. The only facility available was a demonstration lab without PCs, so there was no possibility of word processing or printing. Thus, the most suitable choice seemed to be the E-mail Student Lists based at La Trobe University in Australia which can be used on a very flexible basis (for a description of these lists, see the previous article.)

The activity began in the second week and terminated in the fifteenth week. Each section met once a week for one hour and fifteen minutes in the Demo lab. The students were asked to subscribe to at least one of the following lists: ENGL-SL, EVENT-SL, MOVIE-SL, MUSIC-SL or SPORT-SL, with the option of additionally subscribing to CHAT-SL or DISCUSS-SL. The number of lists to which students could subscribe was proportionately related to the amount of space allotted to their e-mail accounts.

I had six main objectives. The most basic goal was to familiarize students with the use of the computer and e-mail. Only four students were already computer-literate, two of whom had had limited experience with the Internet. Therefore, an initial training session by the Computing Center was essential. I supervised further training with the learn-as-you-go philosophy, spending more time with the timid learners, while allowing the braver ones to learn from their own mistakes.

The second goal was communication with a real audience in contrast to communication with the teacher and colleagues which may not be as spontaneous. Furthermore, interaction with students from other parts of the world produced a greater than usual effort to communicate points of view, as students encountered different The third goal, an extension of the second, was to generate new ideas and vocabulary for writing. Students talked to each other sharing ideas and factual information which they referred to in class discussions and essays. Many made lists of new vocabulary words, as well.

The fourth goal was to increase reading speed and general fluency. As the Student Lists generated a lot of mail and the students only had one hour and fifteen minutes to read it, select messages they wanted to respond to, then write and send responses, they had to work in English much more quickly than they usually would. But because they were motivated by the desire to express their opinions, they accomplished the task within the allotted time.

The fifth goal was to involve students in a fun learning activity. As these were graduate students, almost all of whom had full-time jobs and came to class tired after work, I wanted them to have a relaxed and enjoyable learning activity. Therefore, I did not put any pressure on them, by checking spelling or grammar, unless asked to do so.

The final goal was to use the Student Lists as a gateway to more sophisticated Internet applications. Towards the end of the semester, when they were comfortable with the e-mail facility, I introduced them to Gopher and telnet resources directly related to their academic fields.

Evaluation

On the whole, the activity was successful. All students achieved limited computer literacy. All increased their reading speed and gained a fluency in English which they had previously lacked. The majority looked forward to the activity; two students even made use of the public computer labs outside of class to pursue the activity on their own. On the other hand, two felt their time would have been better spent on activities which they perceived as being more directly related to passing the end-of-term test. All benefitted from the interaction with foreign students as reflected in their increased awareness of international current events.

An additional positive side-effect of the activity was the experience I gained as a teacher attempting for the first time to integrate an Internet activity into an EFL class. Overcoming technical problems and student fears of the machine and gaining a feeling for time versus task prepared me for my current involvement in the HUT Individual Writing Exchange based in Finland (see *The Individual Writing Exchange* elsewhere in this section), now possible as our CALL lab is connected to the Internet.

I would suggest that first-time teachers focus on technical requirements, such as setting up student e-mail accounts, seeing that terminals or PCs stay in good working order, and arranging for an initial training session before the activity begins. There is nothing more disappointing and frustrating for the student than sitting down to a machine and discovering that it is the only one that does not work. In spite of all one's best efforts, however, connections may slow down or even break down, and students must be prepared for this. Teachers should, therefore, have equally interesting and enjoyable substitute activities on hand.

Contributor

Aliah Schleifer teaches English to Egyptian graduate students at the American University in Cairo. She has an M.A. in Education/TEFL from the American University in Beirut, an M.A. in Classical Arabic Language-Literature from the American University in Cairo, and a Ph.D. in Arabic-Islamic Studies from Exeter University.

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POLYNESIAN LANGUAGES ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Context

The purpose of this activity is to facilitate the learning and teaching of Maori, Hawaiian, Tahitian, Samoan, and other Polynesian languages from pre-school to university through a computer-based communications system.

Description

Te Wahapū (the estuary) is a computer-based communications system (bulletin board system or, BBS) which was set up with the help of a donation of equipment by IBM (NZ) Ltd in 1990, and officially launched in 1991. The major purpose of Te Wahapū has been to act as a stimulus to the revitalization of the Maori language, by providing a means of enabling users and learners of Maori to use modern information technology to communicate with each other in a Maori-language environment, and by giving them access to resources in and about the language through databases, file storage areas, and online conferences. Soon after its inception, the system also became a facility for the newly-established Polynesian Languages Forum to establish an online database of modern terminology in all Polynesian languages which are used for educational or administrative purposes. The system is run by Te Wāhanga Kaupapa Māori (the Maori interests section) of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, with the help of a network of supporters and contributors.

Te Wahapū has from the outset been operated on the principle that the medium is the message. This meant making sure that all the menus, system messages, and prompts appeared in Maori from the time the connect message was transmitted until the caller logged off. This meant that a very large number of computer terms had to be invented, some by giving old words new meanings such as kōnae (a small basket) which has become the word for "disk", and some created by various slights of hand or tongue. For example, pouwhanga (modem) is derived from pouaka whakarerekē ngaru (wave-changing box). This caused technical as well as linguistic problems in the early days of the project; as the software we used did not have configuration files for the system messages, we just hacked into the software to get rid of the English. We had to be careful, however, that we did not over-write any of the code. Obviously, we were not the only people interested in using a language other than English in high technology, as within a year templates became available which could be configured in any language and compiled into the executable files. We now use Maximus CBCS software, with BinkleyTerm as the front door to attend appropriately to human callers, computers delivering mail, and faxes.

Maori, like other Polynesian languages, has phonemic vowel length. Thus mātā means "a heap", matā means "obsidian" (or "bullet"), and mata means "face". Te Wahapū gave its users the option of choosing the system they liked best by using a tilde following the vowel symbol in files (e.g. mata~), and having alternate language files for online messages: one set (the default) using the tilde, one with double vowels, and one using characters with circumflex accents. One of our network wrote a special program that users of DOS-based machines could load before they ran their communications programs which would display the circumflex accents as macrons. We would have used the circumflexes with everyone, except that we found that even with IBM-type systems, many screens would not display 8-bit characters correctly or at all, and that these characters also caused havoc on the Internet — when people tried dialing into our system from a mainframe computer, things would seize up at both ends as soon as the first a-circumflex was transmitted! Where we are able to use double spacing, we have used an underline symbol to substitute for a macron over the vowel immediately below.

Computerese in any language is a problem, and many of the people who use our system are second-language learners of Maori. To ease the burden a little bit we do have bilingual help screens. However, Maori is the only language for the menus; for system messages, users do have the choice of French (to assist callers from French Polynesia until we get a Tahitian version of the language file ready), but English is not an option for anyone.

The welcome screen itself is a language-lesson of sorts, even for native-speakers of Maori. A few years ago, the Maori Language Commission changed the names of the months from their English-derived versions to a set drawn from traditional lunar calendars. To help ourselves and a lot of other people remember what month it was, we announce this in both the old and new formats on the opening screen, as in the example below. The first two lines of the text read: "This month is Haratua, the tenth month of the Maori year; this month is also Mei (May), the fifth month of the Julian year". In 1995, the fact that this is Maori Language Year is mentioned. All this is followed by a proverb, which changes with each log-on.

```
 *<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*
Ko Haratua te marama nei, te marama tekau o te tau Maori.
Ko Mei hoki tenei marama, te tuarima o nga marama o te tau Hurio
Ko te Tau o te Reo Maori tenei, a, ko tenei te whakatauki o te wa:
   Mauri tu, mauri ora
   Mauri noho, mauri mate
 *<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*<<<>>>*
```

Once they have logged on to the system, users can check their mail at the Poutāpeta (Post Office) command, or go directly to various conference, file and database sections. Like most computer based communication systems, there are different levels of access to Te Wahapū. Students from the junior classes in primary-school immersion programs, for example, have access only to the Maori-language facilities and the bilingual dictionaries. Their teachers can roam the world, as Te Wahapū is also a member of the K12Net educational network and of FidoNet. This gives them access to international flows of information and ideas, especially important for those who do not otherwise have direct access to the Internet. They can also communicate by e-mail with anyone who has an Internet address.

Even the immersion-only students can set their sights on distant horizons, however. At the end of 1993 a link with Hawaiian immersion programs was set up, which attracted an enthusiastic response from both ends of the Pacific. Students in Maori immersion programs wrote to their Hawaiian counterparts in Maori, and the Hawaiians responded in Hawaiian.

```
Na: Ngahuia Henare
Ma: Katoa                  Kupu #2,Dec-21-93 14:28:02
Marau: Kia ora

MSGID: 3:771/210.2 2d174e42

Kia ora. kei te pehea koe?
```

```
Kei te tuhi au ki a koe no te mea kei te pirangi au kia mohio i to
whanau.

He Maori ahau. Ka haere au ki te kura Rawhiti. Ko toku tuakana tetahi o
nga kuini o te kura. Ko enei nga hapu o te whanau. Ko Donna raua ko Wera
oku matua. Ko Kara raua ko Noti oku tuakana. Ko Rarangi toku teina. Ko
Te Wera raua ko Tutere oku tungane. Ko Te Oreore raua ko Katihiku oku
marae. Ko Nga Tau e Waru raua ko Ngati Huia oku whare tipuna. Ko Ngati
Hamua te hapu. No reira, tena koe e hoa.

Ngahuia Henare.

--- Maximus 2.01wb
* Origin: <<Te Wahapu>> Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara, Aotearoa (NZ) (3:771/210)
SEEN-BY: 771/210 30816/1 2 3 345/6
PATH: 771/210

Na: Kaimalino Andrade
Ma: Ngahuia Henare          Kupu #3, Jan-10-94 13:53:24
Marau: Kia ora

MSGID: 1:345/6.0 2d31a424
REPLY: 3:771/210.2 2d174e42

Aloha,

O kau inoa o Kaimalino Andrade. He Hawaii au. Hele au i Waiau. O kau mau
makua o Maile me Carlos Andrade.12 ou makahiki

--- Maximus 2.01wb
* Origin: FRIENDLY USERS NETWORK BBS [Pearl City, HI, USA] (1:345/6)
SEEN-BY: 345/6 771/210
PATH: 345/6
```

The children at both ends had a great deal of fun coming to grips with the similarities and differences in their obviously related languages, and work started on compiling Hawaiian/Maori phrase lists and glossaries, which were also displayed on Te Wahapū. Here are the first few lines of the guide for letter writers:

```
ETAHI KUPU WHAITAKE Hawai‘i / Maori o Aotearoa

Aloha !
Te~na~ koe / ko~rua / koutou

Welina! / Aloha! / ‘Ano’ai!
Kia ora!

Pehea ‘oe? / Pehea ‘olua? / Pehea ‘oukou?
Kei te pe~hea koe? E pe~hea ana koe? / ... korua? / ... koutou?

Maika‘i no au / maua / makou.
Kei te pai au / E pai ana ahau / ... ma~ua / ... ma~tou.
```

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This particular activity has been interrupted temporarily as the Hawai'i Department of Education shut down its FidoNet service at the end of the 1993/4 school year. However, it is set to resume shortly, as the Hawaiian immersion programs have set up their own system and will add the capacity to handle FidoNet-style mail to it.

There are file sections devoted to writing in Maori, children's writing, ASCII versions of 19th and early 20th century materials that are out of print, and discussions in Maori of contemporary legal, cultural and social issues. Apart from the Maori-language-only conferences and file areas, there are many bilingual areas so that teachers and others can communicate with each other in the language they can handle most comfortably in that situation. Often, and increasingly, this will be Maori.

Among the facilities Te Wahapū offers are a very comprehensive database of new and technical words in Maori, with English and Maori equivalents. This is contributed to by the Maori Language Commission, and new writing in Maori from any source is regularly scanned for additional material. When an item appears to be absent from the online database, users are encouraged to leave a message enquiring about it. There is generally a fast response, often from someone "passing by".

Also online is a learners dictionary of Maori, which has been used with enthusiasm by students in a secondary-school Maori-immersion program, which has a clone of the system in the classroom to minimize online costs. We are encouraging schools to use this option, which gives them easy access to most facilities of the system, and means that toll calls are necessary only for mail transfers and updates to the databases. These can be made at off-peak times, and become a minimal cost. Older students and adults can also access extensive databases of Proto-Polynesian reconstructions and their known cognates in all Polynesian languages, large databases of terminology in Hawaiian (about 8,000 items) and Tahitian, and smaller but growing glossaries of new words in other major Polynesian languages. This comparative information is not only interesting in itself, but also helpful in suggesting forms which new vocabulary might take in order to retain a pan-Polynesian ambiance.

Evaluation

The system has been very successful in demonstrating that the Maori language and "hi-tech" are not mutually-exclusive entities. It has also become an effective vehicle for propagating and giving people access to new vocabulary in Maori, as well as providing a means for actually using some specialist terminology. Student access is still very limited, however, because many schools have limited equipment, and computers attached to modems may not even be readily accessible to staff. Teachers using the system still need a lot of support and encouragement (this is true of information technology generally, not just in relation to Te Wahapū). The time to learn and then to use the system effectively is an ever-pressing problem, even when the potential advantages of communicating electronically locally and around the world are realized. However, systems like this cannot be used if they don't exist. The response to the system has been very encouraging; we have over 400 registered users on our single node, clones in two schools with four more awaiting connection, and more requests for information than we can comfortably cope with.

Contributor

Richard Benton coordinates the Maori language and education program of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, and is director of the Polynesian Languages Forum's terminological database.

Richard Benton
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NZ Council for Educational Research
P.O. Box 3237, Wellington 6015, New Zealand.
Richard.Benton@vuw.ac.nz
Kaiwhakahaere at 3:772/210 (FidoNet)

Appendix: Acessing Te Wahapū

Dial in directly with your modem to:
+64–4 388–5552

OR telnet to:
tewahapu@wcc.govt.nz

OR start on the World Wide Web at:
http://www.wcc.govt.nz/

Click on "Our Cultural Partners"

CREATING AND USING A SLANG DICTIONARY VIA E-MAIL

Context

The e-mail activity described below has worked well with upper-level German students at the high school level.

Description

Second-, third- and fourth-year German students with only word processing experience benefited from their participation in an electronic conference sponsored by the Goethe Institute of Chicago and the Koerber Foundation of Hamburg, Germany.

The hosts of the Transatlantic Conference offered monthly topics of discussion, such as introducing individuals and schools, exploring cultural stereotypes, and looking back on WWII after 50 years. During this conference, we suggested the creation of a slang dictionary for which students on each side initially offered definitions and examples of usage for a list of self-selected terms or phrases in their respective native tongues.

On our side, students simply word-processed their work (done most often in pairs) which was first copied onto a single disk and then onto an electronic mail format (America Online was used). At this point, the teacher could look over and edit if necessary the class texts (individual classes were kept and sent separately). Very little editing was necessary, perhaps because students had been told not to use nasty or vulgar terms and to ask about anything questionable. Students were not given direct access to the school's online account. While this created a little extra cut-and-paste work for the teacher, it allayed any possible concerns about inappropriate contributions to the conference by students via the school account.

German students responded quickly and interestingly to this prompt with novel slang or colloquial expressions for things as basic as mom, a girlfriend, or a cigarette. Much of this language was particular to northern Germany or even Hamburg, making it an interesting cultural lesson as well.

Students then learned these expressions and were asked to use them in a variety of written and oral contexts. The sources of the slang on both sides were available through the conference or by direct e-mail to clarify or expound upon the correct usage of any terms.

Evaluation

Students seemed to enjoy all aspects of this project. First, the electronic connection with their peers in Germany allowed them to use their German in authentic exchanges with native speakers. While the initial part of this assignment was not in the target language, it provided a good start for later and more difficult messages composed in German. Students were eager to act as authorities of their native tongue and to discuss or explain their everyday language. Second, students seem to pick up quickly those German phrases of use to them in their everyday speech. This had been earlier observed and was part of the inspiration for the slang dictionary project. Finally, students used the German slang with the confidence of knowing it had come from their German peers and was indeed current and actual.

From a teacher's point of view, it is always exciting to see students learning with enthusiasm, especially in self-starting projects like this one. Evaluation was mostly done on the basis of participation, though later use of the German slang by students could be more traditionally critically assessed. The preparatory and evaluative work involved — in addition to the mechanical work of assembling, sending, and delivering hard copies of the students' work — seemed well worth the positive results of the project. Also, the electronic contact with German teachers in planning these discussions was fun and rewarding.

Contributor

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ENGL-SL: ACCESS TO IN-DEPTH HELP WITH ENGLISH

Context

ENGL-SL is one of the several student e-mail (SL) lists (see "International Student E-mail Discussion Lists" earlier in this section), but is sufficiently specialized to warrant a separate description.

ENGL-SL was founded in May 1994 in response to the questions about the English language that had begun to appear on the list CHAT-SL. After a slow start, ENGL-SL has become one of the larger student lists, serving postsecondary students from around the globe. Most postings appear to be from high-intermediate and advanced learners, although some postings come from low-intermediate learners. A significant number of subscribers are ES/FL teacher-trainees from non-English speaking backgrounds. The list monitors are Marilyn Martin and Rachel Koch.

Description

Student subscribers to the list ask a wide variety of questions or express opinions about the grammatical, lexical, and stylistic features of English, as well as about learning English in general. We monitors prefer to let other students answer the questions if possible. Often the other students' explanations are of excellent quality. If answers are not adequate, or if no answers appear from students for 24 hours, the monitors, or in some cases, one or more teachers, will post an explanation.

A wide variety of questions is asked on ENGL-SL:

> "...I always have the problem of *run-on* in the sentences of my essay. I really want anybody to tell me the rules to prevent this problem."
>
> "...I have [a] question regarding the two prepositions [sic]: although and despite. To me, both seem to have the same meaning but I am just wondering why people use 'although' much more than 'despite...'
>
> "Who could tell me the meanings of 'in vivo' and 'in vitro'? They seem unlike English. Is it good to use such words in our papers?"

Quite often, a student's question will stimulate an answer from another student:

> "Hello Everyone! I have a problem with the articles. Could anyone say when I need use A/AN and when I need use THE? My native language is Russian which has no articles..."
>
> "Hi...! A or An is usually used with an object which is uncertain or for the first time appears in an article. For example, I got A small cat yesterday. I don't know who is the owner of THE cat, but I decided to raise it. "The" is usually with a specific thing or event or things that has appeared before them. Example is like THE one above.*"

The monitor steps in only to confirm, expand, or correct what has been written, or to stimulate further discussion.

A unique feature of the list is the weekly Puzzler. Every Monday students read a new installment of an ongoing soap opera that contains errors to note and correct. There are two story lines, each written by one of us for alternate Mondays. Each Puzzler highlights some difficult point of English, in an integrative, contextualized format. The error types are sometimes grammatical, but often they carry a semantic theme. We deliberately direct one story line at intermediate learners, and the other at advanced learners. One story line can be thought of as opera seria, and the other, opera buffa.

Students may post their Puzzler answers either to the list or to the monitors. Each student who has written a set of answers receives an acknowledgement from one or the other of us, with a concise evaluation and a suggestion to wait for the complete feedback, which arrives on Fridays. The feedback on Friday provides not only the correct answers but also a detailed discussion of the points involved (See Appendix for portions of a sample Puzzler story and feedback).

Evaluation

At the outset, we felt that students should post everything to the list, as do the netters on the other student lists. It became clear very early, however, that most students are shy about posting their answers to the Puzzler on the list — no doubt for fear of exposing their ignorance — although more and more of them are taking the plunge. In contrast, questions about English appear on the list quite regularly.

Not all questions appear on the list, however. Those students who prefer to ask their questions of us privately receive private answers, although we often coax them successfully to post to the list also. Additionally, students who ask us for corrections to their own English receive helpful comments. Students who do not explicitly ask for correction often receive subtle corrective feedback in our responses, anyway. While many netters are still finding their way in English, the linguistic level of many posters is surprisingly high; some netters have near-native fluency. Students who are more advanced tend to help those who are less advanced.

The large number and variety of questions that have appeared on the list bear witness to the need for such a forum, where students may ask about points of language use that they are not sure of, away from classmates and teachers.

Feedback from students about the list has been uniformly positive, with messages such as

> "I always appreciate all your helps"
>
> "...But now I feel so happy that I asked the question, because your explanation really help me learn more about English. Again, thanks!"
>
> "...as you notice I haven't participated in answering your puzzler for quite long. The reason is I was very busy with school works. However, I still follow all the Feedback and learn from them a lot of new thing. Today, I am trying to answer this puzzler because it kinds of challenging me. Please correct my mistakes and thank you in advance."

Contributors

Marilyn Martin, ex-director of English for Academic Purposes at Cornell, has trained teachers in Latin America and the U.S. Rachel Koch has been teaching and developing curriculum, principally at the University of Miami, for 25 years.

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Appendix: Puzzler Story and Feedback

The "Amanda" Puzzler story
by Rachel Koch:

... The Adventures of Amanda continues in this installment with a reply to Amanda from her cousin, Natasha. Remember that Amanda wrote to Natasha last time, telling her of her deep love for Richard and announcing her wedding plans.

In this letter, there are several mistakes in the noun clauses, which appear in the numbered sentences. Only the numbered sentences have errors; the others do not. For added clarity, the numbered sentences, with errors, are marked with asterisks(*)...

Here is Natasha's letter:

Dear Cousin Amanda,

*1. I am so very pleased to know how happy are you, and I want you to be happy for the rest of your life.

However, there is something that I think you should know.

*2. I have been debating whether or not should I tell you about this, and I have decided to speak to you frankly, as a caring cousin and dear friend should.

*3. What am I going to say may upset you, but please realize that I am telling you for your own good. Although Richard is good looking, successful, charming, and nice to your mother, I think that he may be involved in something unsavory.

*4. You know that I work in the First International Bank, where I am a vice president, so it is easy for me to know what do our customers do. Well, Richard has been withdrawing a large sum of money on the first of every month...

FEEDBACK

1. I am so very pleased to know how happy YOU ARE, and I want you to be happy for the rest of your life.
2. I have been debating whether or not I SHOULD tell you about this, and I have decided to speak to you frankly, as a caring cousin and dear friend should.
3. WHAT I AM going to say may upset you, but please realize that I am telling you for your own good...
4. You know that I work in the First International Bank, where I am a vice president, so it is easy for me to know what OUR CUSTOMERS DO.

Now, what is the kind of error that appears in each of the sentences? Each of the numbered sentences in The Puzzler had an incorrectly written noun clause. What is a noun clause? It's a clause that acts like a single noun. It can be the grammatical subject or object of a verb. In a noun clause, the word order is: Subject, then Verb, which is the normal word order of statements. A noun clause never has the form of a question, and never uses the verbs "do," "does," or "did." In order to produce correct noun clauses, you have to forget all the rules for forming questions that you worked so hard to learn. :)

E-MAIL FOR DISTANCE JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHER TRAINING

Context

This is a project available for students of Japanese from the elementary through intermediate levels.

Description

In Japan, it is very difficult for the students in training programs for teachers of Japanese to learn what actually goes on in foreign language classes. On the other hand, outside Japan, many institutions need native Japanese teachers. If we connect classrooms of Japanese language overseas with the teacher training programs in Japan, we can solve one of the main problems of these related fields.

Since 1993, e-mail messages in Japanese have been exchanged regularly between the University of Tsukuba in Japan, the University of Stirling (Scotland), the University of Durham (England), and the University of Melbourne (Australia). The students learning Japanese at these universities send their compositions to the students of the teacher training program in Tsukuba. They correct the compositions and return them with explanations and personal letters under my guidance.

Generally, the students who have spent sometime in Japan are interested in this project in order to maintain their level of proficiency in Japanese.

The procedure of exchanging e-mails differs according to the university. In the case of the University of Durham, this is a kind of independent study. Each student has his or her own e-mail address. The students write their compositions by themselves following the theme and send them to us. After correcting the compositions, we send them back both to the student and the instructor.

We can now handle Japanese scripts on any computer using a Japanese word-processing software on the Dos/V(IBM), Kanji Talk 7 (Mac), or Japanese Language Kit (Mac) platform, making it possible for even an ordinary Japanese language teacher without special knowledge in using the computer to exchange Japanese messages by e-mail.

Evaluation

The project appears to have provided concrete assistance for students around the world who want to maintain and increase their level of proficiency in Japanese. Students who have previously lived or studied in Japan have shown particular interest in making use of the service.

Up to the present, the increase of motivation, understanding of the differences in the two cultures, and the realization of the importance of cooperation and`responsibility to develop this type of international project has been observed.

As for the teachers in training, the exchange has provided them concrete practice in responding to students' writing. We've noticed that over time their corrections and explanations have become more and more appropriate, which indicates that the practice appears to be helping them evaluate the level of proficiency of the learners and respond in an appropriate fashion.

There are still, however, many problems to solve. We have to know how often we can exchange e-mails during a term since there are discrepancies in the terms or semesters between Japan and other countries. We also have to find out a way to shorten the time between receiving the e-mails to sending them back.

Finally, we are also still seeking a good system for marking and explaining errors since standard techniques such as underlining errors cannot be used over normal e-mail transmission.

Contributor

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GETTING MISTAKES INTO PERSPECTIVE

Context

The following activity works well with beginning to advanced students of any foreign language and of all ages from when they are still almost new to using e-mail for cross-cultural communication. It works particularly well with students who may be worried about giving their correspondents a good impression of their language ability, especially if they have been taught to think that grammatically correct language is all that matters.

Description

Teachers who complain that the use of e-mail in the foreign language class encourages students to be sloppy about grammar and spelling forget three things: One of the ways in which students learn grammar is by making mistakes; students need to be shown how to create texts and not just sentences; native speakers make a variety of mistakes when they write — and for a number of different reasons.

To help students get the problem of mistakes in perspective when writing, it seems to be a worthwhile strategy to get them to evaluate their own work and that of other students periodically, and to get them to do so in precise categories. This can be most effective if you ask them to evaluate the work of native and non-native speakers at the same time, as this will help them get a more complete overall picture of their progress.

Clearly, work on international e-mail projects is an ideal way to do this. Such comparisons are by no means as demoralizing as they sound if you get students to compare like with like and assess the relative communicative success or failure of a text at the same time as various language errors. Possible categories are:

CONTENT

- Is it interesting?
- Is it clear? Is it all to the point?

STYLE

- Is the message well organized?
- Is it reader-friendly?
- Is the language appropriate?

SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION

- Are there any mistakes (minus half a point for each mistake)

GRAMMAR

- Are there any mistakes? (minus one point for big mistakes only — discuss what constitutes a big mistake)

When talking about grammar you might suggest that while really big mistakes obscure meaning, all others are relatively minor. Even with big mistakes you need not necessarily deduct extra points if a mistake is repeated. You might also consider giving extra credit points for the use of more advanced grammar.

It seems appropriate to introduce a simple points system into this activity — though preferably in a friendly, informal way — both for reasons of clarity and because that is how international foreign language examination boards (like the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) work. If you give a maximum of 20 points for the first two categories, and ten each for the last two, each piece of work can be awarded a possible maximum total of 60 points. This gives the non-native speakers a fair chance of getting a good score and rewards their ability to produce good discourse, which in the real world usually counts for more than minor mistakes that can easily be corrected.

Evaluation

The main benefits of this activity are two: (1) to catapult students into the real world, away from the artificial world of the classroom; and (2) to build up their confidence by showing them what they can do as well as what they can't. E-mail enables the teacher to at last get around what many recognize as the main problem of the monolingual foreign language classroom: the fact that students normally use their own language when they really want to communicate and hardly ever the target language.

Contributor

Mark Irvine (MA Manchester University, UK) has taught English as a foreign language in Italy for more than 20 years. His latest book, *Write Around the World*, focuses on how foreign language classes can get the most out of e-mail projects

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GLOBAL BABEL: A MODERN VERSION OF "DON'T TELL THE POSTMAN"

Context

This activity is appropriate for all languages at all levels.

Description

Global Babel is an online version of "Don't Tell the Postman", a child's game where a message is whispered from one person to the next in a long chain until finally the last person in the chain announces the message for all to hear. Instead of a whisper, Global Babel uses international correspondence and translation to form an interpretative chain with equally surprising results.

This activity is an interactive, entertaining, playful way to learn about languages and the ambiguity of interpreting and translating. It increases awareness of how information disperses and facts are distorted by going through a chain of people and helps students realize how environment and culture play into the correct understanding of a foreign tongue. During this process, the activity allows students to establish and maintain contacts with classrooms around the world via the Internet.

Several short text samples of an appropriate level of difficulty are prepared by the teachers in either language. These are given to the first pupil, who translates the text and sends it to the other classroom via the Internet. There, another pupil translates the message received back into its original language and sends it back to the first classroom. Now a student different from the one that did the initial translation will be converting the text back into the other language, then sending the text. After everyone has had the chance to participate in the game, both the original and the last version of a message, as well as all intermediate versions will be posted, printed out, and displayed. (The last version of a text should again be in the initial language.) You will be surprised how and in what funny ways a text changes after having gone through the minds of several pupils, irrespective of their level of proficiency. The more pupils participate in a chain, the more amazing the results will be.

Now the class can go through the messages to determine what went wrong and why. They then discuss ways to avoid the mistakes that were made. They learn, for example, to avoid ambiguities and uncommon terminology, improve the syntax, kand eep sentences short. Discuss the impact of individual, subjective interpretation.

For added fun, the teacher can pick certain cultural expressions and puns which are not easy to translate. For a more serious demonstration, use a piece of news from a newspaper or magazine to show how quickly facts can get twisted even without intent.

Evaluation

Playing this game through the net has the great advantage of being able to involve native speakers in their respective countries without major delays in the information exchange. It even allows for interactive play during a class session unless the time difference between two countries is too great.

This game amplifies the phenomenon every kid has experienced while playing the famous "Don't tell the Postman" game. Teachers should address the serious implications behind the global Babel game, namely the distortion of information, the deception of recipients, and the mere impossibility of fully preserving the original message across languages.

Teachers can also talk about the responsibility translators and interpreters face every day at the United Nations headquarters, at international summits, or simply with tourist groups. Students will improve their language skills and become more alert and tolerant when exchanging or receiving information, whether it is across languages or in the same language.

Contributor

Anita Rayburn-Klein is a student of elementary education and biological sciences at Lesley College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. She enjoys languages and speaks German and some Arabic.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING VIA E-MAIL: DEMONSTRABLE SUCCESS WITH GERMAN

Context

This paper demonstrates how, via e-mail exchange, a learner's German improved over a period of almost six months. The circumstances leading to the experience reported in this paper were purely accidental. The activity described below worked well with a learner of German intermediate level; however, it could be carried out with any language at any level. Because of the nature of e-mail — conversational though it often is — the paper focuses on written German.

Description

In this case study we consider the e-mails exchanged by a native German speaker and an English speaker over a period of 6 months. It was only after this period that the e-mails were considered to warrant the study because the learner had kept all the correspondence as a learning aid, previously unknown to the German speaker. When the German speaker examined the e-mails she was struck by the extent to which these appeared to have been actively used by the learner to improve his written German.

THE NATIVE GERMAN SPEAKER

When reference is made to the German speaker or to the native speaker we mean the e-mail partner who provided in particular the language specific input and gave the learner opportunities to copy authentic phrases.

THE LEARNER

Before the case study the learner had O level German. He also attended a weekly German intermediate class. The learner was highly motivated to improve his German. Something outside his normal sphere of work was interesting and refreshing, and he was considering working in Germany. However, at the beginning of the period the learner was not conversant with the conventions used in German letter writing (e.g., starting the very first sentence without a capital letter, paragraphing). The e-mail correspondence was conducted purely in German and developed into discussions about hobbies, work, different mentalities, stereotypes, and private lives. The learner would try to use words, phrases and constructions that the German speaker had used as soon as possible in order to remember the vocabulary concerned, and note the context in which it was used. The learner enjoyed the e-mail exchange, which meant that the learning process was much quicker than what any other kind of teaching could have generated. Grammar improved through the learner spotting patterns of sentence or word usage and from there forming his own rules that could then be adapted whenever exceptions occurred.

The period that this paper covers ended when the learner got an opportunity to holiday in Germany and there practice his acquired language skills.

This paper examines the e-mail exchange between January 11th and July 14th, 1994. The entire period of five months can be roughly divided into three shorter periods. The first involves the first four weeks during which only seven e-mails were sent back to the German speaker, but this was the crucial time when the learner made the most progress. The second lasts roughly from March 14th to June 13th when the learner made slower progress even though e-mails were exchanged nearly every day. The last period comprises the e-mails exchanged from June 13th to July 14th. In this last period the learner managed to build more difficult sentences. The progress he made in this time span is very apparent.

Spelling mistakes are not taken into account because it is now difficult to establish whether these were actually spelling mistakes or typing errors. However, the German speaker did not always correct what was wrong. In fact hardly any corrections were made. From time to time the learner asked questions concerning grammar or idioms. The answers to these questions formed the bulk of the direct language explanation given to the learner. The majority of the progress made by the learner occurred through his copying the use of authentic expressions and phrases.

FIRST PERIOD

In the first three or four e-mails, the learner made many typical mistakes for an English speaker. These were on the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic level, and often with overlap among the three. On the semantic level many mistakes occurred: '*Gebrauchen deutsche Universität*' for "use of German universities" and '*Nachrichtung*' for "message" and '*weil ich ins Stadtzentrum spazieren gehen muß*' for "because I have to go to the city center", and '*Endlich, zwei Fragen*...' for "Finally, two questions". For each of these examples the learner used the correct word or phrase in the e-mail that followed because he deliberately copied and re-used them. After the German speaker asked, '*Warum mußt Du in die Stadt gehen?*', the learner no longer used '*spazieren*' as in the third example above. In fact he used the correct form subsequently in his reply. Other mistakes such as '*Diese Einrichtung darf mann bekommen*...' for "this facility lets one get" were striking. It was not corrected in the reply but re-used by the native speaker to give the learner the opportunity to re-use the correct word, i.e., '*man*' from then onwards.

Most mistakes in the first time span could be noticed on the pragmatic level, i.e., the typical German phrases the learner tried to use but used incorrectly. The mistakes are mainly morphological such as '*Bis nächste Dienstag*', '*Hast du ein tolle Wochenende*', and '*Freundlichen Grüßen*' Again within the next few e-mail exchanges the learner sent the correct versions, e.g., '*Bis Dienstag*', or '*Viele Grüße*'. He also used '*Also, viele Grüsse*'. These expressions were copied and from then on always used in the right context. He also employed idiomatic expressions after only six e-mail exchanges such as '*Ich habe keine Ahnung*'. The learner also started writing: '*Danke noch einmal*...', '*Tolle Idee*', *Tschüß*'. These phrases are very natural conversational German expressions and show that the student has a certain amount of confidence in using the language. Introductory sentences such as '*Wie geht's Ihnen?*' were used in the wrong register, i.e. '*Ihnen*' instead of '*Dir*', or '*Mit freundlichen Grüßen*' instead of. '*Viele Grüße*' or '*Herzliche Grüße*'. But as already mentioned above, after only a few e-mail exchanges, they were used correctly.

With regard to syntax not many mistakes were found. The learner tried hard to produce longer sentences with the right position of the verb, i.e., at the end of the sentence. Here are some examples from the first eight e-mail exchanges: '*Wenn Du wünscht, kann ich es Dir machen*', *Ich glaube nicht, daß mein Deutsch so gut ist*' und '*Ich glaube, daß es ein paar Lücken hier gibt*'.

SECOND PERIOD

In the second period e-mails were exchanged every day and more mistakes became apparent. The fastest progress can be noticed again on the pragmatic level where the learner copied more expressions. Expressions and phrases like '*Also, erstmal tschüss*', '*Bis morgen abend*', '*Also viele Grüsse*', *Du hast viel Glück*', '*Also das ist alles*', '*Keine Ursache*', '*Hallihallo*', '*Also, bis irgendwann mal*', '*Was denkst du darüber*', '*Übrigens*', '*Prima*' '*Wir haben viel Glück*' were employed correctly. 'Mich *auch*' was repeatedly used incorrectly by the learner. This is an example of the learner falling back into literal translation of the mother tongue. In English the accusative pronoun in 'Me *too*' is used, whereas in German the nominative is used in '*Ich auch*'. In contrast, a similar type of error '*Du bist rechts*' was only used incorrectly once or twice before being used correctly without fail. The reasons for the difference are unclear. Many mistakes again occurred on the semantic level. The mistakes are mainly lexical such as: '*...du kannst die Uhr wählen*', '*Ich dacht, daß wir ähnlich Interressante haben*', '*Danke noch einmal für dein Biete*', *Ich bin mir wirklich nicht sicher, ob ich die richtige Bescheid gemacht habe*', '*Kate sagte, daß sie interressant hat*', '*Wahrscheinlich eine gute Bescheid, ja*', '*Ich dachte, weil du interressiert an Machine Translation hast*'. These mistakes were never corrected by the German speaker. The learner copied the correct versions in the German speaker's reply and used them in later e-mails.

Concerning syntax, the learner also made very quick progress. The following highlights a wide range of examples the learner copied from the native speaker: '*Ich hoffe, das klappt*', '*Ich freue mich darauf*', '*Es tut mir leid, daß ich vergessen habe, die Informationen zu bringen*', '*Gestern habe ich vergessen zu sagen, dass ich niemanden von den Bewerbungen kenne*', '*Tut mir leid, daß ich...*', '*Es macht nichts, wenn es nicht mehr möglich ist*', '*Ich habe Lust, aber es hängt davon ab, wieviel Zeit ich habe*'.

THIRD PERIOD

The last period shows an increase in the use of complex structures. A more advanced use of the German language is striking. The style also becomes more sophisticated. The learner used more natural German, employed the correct word order and wrote longer sentences. Concerning syntax the learner managed to get longer and more complex sentences right. The following examples highlight this: '*Ich habe* ***mir*** *eine Kopie gemacht*', '*Ich sollte mehr* ***daran*** *arbeiten*'. These sentences would still be correct with the omission of the highlighted words, but with them the sentences become very typical German; '*Ich habe vor drei Jahren Anne Franks Haus in Amsterdam besucht*', '*Ich freue mich auf das Wochenende, weil ich dann meine Eltern besuche*'. Although there are other possibilities for the word order, this is the most natural for a German. Here the main clause/subordinate clause structure, in particular the position of the verb, was used correctly: '*Sobald ich Zeit habe, werde ich deine anderen e-mails beantworten.*' Here the learner has noticed and acted on an important difference between German and English: '*...die Freundin von mir ist ziemlich spät angekommen.*' Whereas in English it would be usual to say 'my friend', the literal translation '*meine Freundin*' would mean 'my girlfriend.'

It is apparent that more morphological mistakes occurred when concentrating on the word order. The following two examples demonstrate this: '*Brighton war sehr sonnig, aber zu heiß, besonders, wenn man ein_Anzug tragen muß.*' '*...habe ich ein__ Brief von der Freundin in Exeter bekommt*'. This type of mistake did not occur previously, and more importantly, did not appear in less complex sentences in e-mails sent at approximately the same time, e.g., '*Ich habe einen Squashschläger gekauft*', *Du hast mir sehr geholfen*.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

However, another field/area of mistakes can be added, that of false friends: '*Ich habe auch ein bißchen geschrieben (nur Noten)...*'. The intended meaning was '*I have also written a little (just notes)*'. The learner used '*Noten*' thinking that the meaning was identical. It is actually a false friend in this context (meaning musical notes). Here it seems likely that the learner has chosen the wrong translation from those presented in a dictionary. The correct one would have been '*Anmerkungen.*'

With regard to the pragmatic level the learner employed now a variety of phrases such as '*Ich bin mir nicht sicher*', '*Ein bißchen ärgerlich*', '*Also, Arbeit ruft*', and '*Ich bin bloß froh...*', '*...aber hin und wieder*'.

Evaluation

The progress that the learner made in the first 6 weeks was enormous. Just by copying expressions (e.g., beginning and ending of letter, and idiomatic expressions) from the German speaker the learner developed much confidence in writing e-mails. Another very obvious example highlights this: '*Vielen Dank, du hast mir sehr geholfen*' was written by the native speaker. The learner replied: '*Vielen Dank, du hast mir auch sehr geholfen*'. The learner copied the sentence and had enough confidence to go one step further and included '*auch*' at the right place. This occurred in the first period. The reason why the progress at the beginning of the exchange was so enormous lies in the fact that it was easy and obvious for the learner to identify what to copy, and the syntax of the German used was kept at a low level. During the second period when e-mails were exchanged nearly every day the progress paradoxically slowed down a little and more mistakes were made. Obviously the level of German became more difficult but another possible reason is that the topics discussed in the e-mails changed very often. New vocabulary and structures were used all the time and as e-mails were more frequently exchanged the learner did not take so much time composing an e-mail.

The third period shows the progress the learner made. He was confident in using idiomatic expressions in the right context. Sentences now comprised main and subsidiary clauses. Mistakes he made in the first period did not occur anymore. The learner started using the right register and an increased vocabulary, at the end of each e-mail he now made use of a larger variety of phrases such as 'Tschüsschen', 'Viele Grüße', and 'Gruß'.

Regarding grammar, mistakes like '*...werde ich Du helfen*' were found. The learner wrote this in his second e-mail but almost always used the correct case in his replies (e.g., '*Wenn du willst, könnte ich dir damit helfen*'). In this example the learner even went one step further and included '*damit*' correctly. Incorrect cases were employed, '*Wenn*' and '*Als*' were used continuously in the wrong context, and the comparative form was used incorrectly. The learner suddenly started using the past tense instead of the present perfect tense. Here are some examples of these mistakes from the e-mail exchange:

> 'Ich werde dir die Anzeige geben, als ich das nächste Mal du sehe'
>
> 'Also, ja, bitte verbessere mich, als ich Fehler mache'
>
> 'Es ist mehr schwierig FTP zu erklären'
>
> 'Ich hoffe, es war ein bißchen mehr interressant auch'
>
> 'Ich mag lieber aktive Dinge auch'

The last two examples demonstrate again that the learner fell back into the structure of his mother tongue, because of '*auch*' at the end of the sentence which is the normal word order in English:

'Tut mir leid, dass es Freitag kein_Wein gab'

'Ich versuchte einen Squashschläger zu kaufen'

'Kate sagte, daß...'

'Das Zitat, daß ich Dir erzählte'

'Sabine rief mich gestern an'

'Ich habe mich darüber gefreut, daß ich fuhr'

It is noticeable that when the learner concentrated on trying to build long sentences, simple grammar and morphological mistakes re-appeared again.

Due to the fact that the learner copied and learnt the German language during the entire period only from one person, his German became very distinctive. For example, so strongly had the learner taken on board the phrasal expressions and style of her writing that the native speaker felt that she was writing e-mails to herself. This is not a disadvantage but an artifact of a one-to-one exchange. We might compare this to a child learning a language from his or her parents in the early learning years. The child's language (content, dialect, and grammar) reflects that of his or her parents and close family.

The German speaker's point of view:

> "I did not mind keeping the whole e-mail exchange in German even though this meant that I did not gain from it, though I did enjoy the fact that the learner was so motivated and keen to learn. At the beginning of the e-mail exchange I tried to correct his mistakes. I found this far too time-consuming, so I thought that if I included his incorrect sentences in the correct form in my reply, he could learn from it."

The learner's point of view:

> "The e-mail was exchanged as a result of me offering to help the native speaker gain access to computer facilities at German Universities. I decided to write in German.
>
> "I did a couple of very deliberate things to help me learn with e-mail. First of all, I tried to copy all new words and expressions from e-mail (from the native speaker or those I had looked up) into a data file, a kind of personal dictionary. This was a real plus as I would often remember the words I had included in the file and searching for their translation was much faster than using a dictionary. The second deliberate thing was that whenever the native speaker used a new expression, I tried to re-use it as soon as possible. I found that I was dealing with new expressions at least three times — once reading it (and possibly looking it up), copying it to my personal dictionary, and lastly using it in return messages. This really enforced learning the new expressions. I had to be self-disciplined but, as I had a strong will to learn, this was really not a problem at all. It quickly became a habit.
>
> "I would always read a message immediately upon receiving it. If I could understand the general meaning, I would not always look up the unknown words straightaway, but sometimes instead, go through a number of e-mails and look up and record these words/phrases. I often replied to a number of e-mails in one long e-mail. If I had time, I would always use the most appropriate phrase I could find, and make a lot of effort to get the reply right.

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> "I expected the native speaker to correct me, perhaps with some ignorance on how long this might take. As a result, when the native speaker did not correct me, I became impatient and a little frustrated and started to ask about the German directly. I did find that not knowing whether I was right or wrong was worrying. Since this six-month period there have been occasions when I have found things that I thought were correct (I had no reason to believe otherwise) were actually unsuitable, e.g., 'benoten' meaning 'to give a mark', which I had always used to mean 'to note'.

> "Despite these criticisms it was obvious to me that I was using more vocabulary, better phrases, and I knew what I was copying (except for typing errors on either side) was correct. Although I was undertaking a German language course at the same time, with the e-mail I was gaining from a very personal exchange, which moved at my pace. In contrast I found the course did not stretch me enough given my level of German. A higher level course was not available and besides, this course had already been paid for. There was also no marked written work so I was not getting the support for my written German, through the course, that I got via the e-mail exchange. None of the advantages of the exchange, that I have already mentioned, were there in the course. For example, I could not record what was *said* by the lecturer, then use it again, or keep it in a form useful to me, and so on. There was no automatic record as there was with e-mail. The German I encountered via e-mail was harder in my opinion than that of the course, and was almost never interrupted with English. Also the course was only two hours, once a week, whereas at times I was writing e-mails nearly every day."

There are drawbacks. Because of the nature of e-mail all the emphasis is on the written language. Also, special character's are normally not transmitted, i.e., instead of 'ü', 'ue' has to be used.

This was a discussion of an accidental piece of research. The degree of learning could perhaps have been even greater if many partners perhaps in different countries communicated with electronic mail and learnt and helped each other learn each other's language. If pairs divided their time and effort equally between the languages, both partners would gain. E-mail partners could then choose to write bilingual messages or alternate between the use of their own and their partner's language from one message to the next. E-mail partners may also negotiate how and what they want to be corrected. A scheme like this has been set up by Helmut Brammerts (International Tandem Network Coordinator) at Bochum University, Germany.

Finally our study shows that through the use of the very simple and popular tool of e-mail a foreign language can be improved tremendously in a natural way, by exploiting peoples' natural desire to communicate.

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Information about tandem e-mail exchanges can be found on the World Wide Web at:
http://tandem.uni.trier.de
http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/rub-slf/Index.html

MIRÁNDONOS: LOOKING AT US E-MAIL/SNAIL-MAIL PROJECT

Context

This activity took place in Spanish I and Spanish II courses in an American high school.

Description

After searching for two months for a good classroom e-mail connection for my Spanish students, I finally found the pot-of-gold when I discovered through a list on K12-Euro-teachers a Spanish newsletter out of Argentina called *Vertiente*. It is published once a month in Spanish, English, and Portuguese and is for the interchange of ideas among teachers using computers and the Internet in their classes.

I subscribed and found out about a classroom e-mail and snail-mail exchange called Mirándonos or Looking at Us: a multi-national mail exchange project between classes from all over the world. We were to send in our name, school name, snail-mail address, e-mail address and a short note introducing ourselves and classes by September 15th. A few days later each of the 18 schools from North, Central, and South America that had responded received via e-mail a list of names and addresses along with the directions.

Each of my three Spanish I classes had four schools to write to and my Spanish II class had five schools. I divided my classes into small groups of five or six students each. Each group was given an address to write to. They wrote individual descriptions of themselves and their families and their likes and dislikes in Spanish on a half sheet of paper, and drew a picture of themselves on the back. As a small group they wrote a Hello/Hola! letter that I later sent to the school via e-mail to tell them that a package would be on the way shortly.

I asked the students to think of other things they would like to put in the envelope representing our school and area. They decided on a school Renaissance certificate (award), a small flag of the U.S., a school newspaper, a class photo, post cards of the city and state, and some news articles and favorite comics. It took a few days for the students to gather the materials and I found a flag company right in our little suburb of Oak Creek! We put everything in the envelopes and sent them off.

Then the waiting started. Our first package came from another Spanish class in the Milwaukee area with letters in Spanish, photos, and postcards. About once a week for the next three months we received e-mail and packages from Sau Paulo, Brazil, Guatemala, San Manuel, Arizona, Santa Cruz, California, Lindsay, Ontario, San José Costa Rica, Lincoln, Nebraska, Greenwich, Connecticut, Temuco, Chile, Montevideo, Uruguay, Mina Clavero, Argentina, and Lima, Peru.

I shared each package with all of my classes and they had great fun reading the notes in Spanish and looking at the photos, menus, brochures, school newspapers, money, and flags. We sent e-mail thank you's to the schools and tried to answer any questions. We are still corresponding with some of the schools in South America via e-mail.

One of our local TV stations sent a reporter to cover this (and our involvement in another project, MayaQuest) since we are one of the "pioneers" involved in these Internet projects in our area.

Evaluation

This was a great first project. It was short and easy to do. Combining the elements of e-mail and snail-mail made it more interesting since we could actually see pictures of the people we were writing to and learn about their school and city. The flags, coins, and school newspapers also made our cyber-friends or ciber-amigos more real to us. We were able to continue the e-mail with some of the schools in South America which was wonderful incentive to learn Spanish for my students.

The cost of sending some of the packages air mail was prohibitive (our foreign language department has a very limited budget), so some of the envelopes to the countries went land route which can take months. The schools in South America went on summer break December through February so we only heard from them a few times before their vacation. We will continue again to correspond with them March to when our school year ends in May. We received 13 responses although we had mailed envelopes to 17. So the students in the groups that did not receive a reply were somewhat disappointed though I had warned them of the possibility at the outset.

Overall, this was a good project and I would definitely do it again, especially since it gave me the e-mail addresses of schools that are online in Latin America. Now that I know these teachers are interested, we can continue to do informal projects on our own. I also have made a lasting cyber-friendship with Daniel José Mariano Olivera, one of the editors of the magazine; I share new World Wide Web addresses and listserves of interest with Daniel, and he shares ideas and Spanish contacts with me. ¡Fantastico!

Contributor

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Appendix: Subscribing to Vertiente

You can subscribe to the Argentinean online newsletter by sending an e-mail message to:
postmaster@rinedu.org.ar

In the body of the message write:

subscribe Vertiente Yourfirstname Yourlastname Youremailaddress

(Where *Yourfirstname* is replaced by your own first name, *Yourlastname* is replaced by your own last name, and *Youremailaddress* is replaced by your full e-mail address inclusive of country code.)

You can also send "Want Ads" for classroom penpal connections with Spanish or Portuguese speaking students to this listserve. They will post these in their monthly newsletters. You can write in Spanish or English. The editors of the newsletter are Daniel José Mariano Olivera and María Cristina Moncalvo.

INTERNATIONAL ROBOT ACTIVITY FOR ADVANCED TECHNICAL ENGLISH

Context

This task-based EFL team writing project involved graduate students in the National Institute of Science and Nuclear Technology in Saclay, France (taught by Linda Thalman), undergraduates in technical fields from The Chinese University of Hong Kong (taught by Jor Chi Keung), and undergraduates in a technical English class at the Helsinki University of Technology (taught by Ruth Vilmi). The students had for the most part studied English as a foreign langauge for 6 to 10 years and their level could be considered upper intermediate to advanced. The students met three hours each week in a 13-week term.

Description

The project divided students from each university into three groups which were matched with groups from the other universities to form three international teams: Robot Team One, Two, and Three. These international teams of 8 to 11 members each worked together on a variety of problem-solving and writing activities throughout the semester.

The project was organized as an international competition to see which team could find the best robotic solution to a real world problem. As part of the project, students completed a number of individual and team writing assignments (see description of minimum portfolios below), experienced cross-cultural communication with students from other countries, practiced technical writing in English using e-mail, presented their team's solution orally to peers and outside visitors, and published final documents on the World Wide Web.

The minimum portfolio for each *student* included an introductory letter or C.V. and an evaluation essay of the project. The minimum portfolio for each *team* included: (1) an international team report with a 250-word definition of the problem and why it needs to be solved and a promotional brochure with a narrative description of the robot, specifications, operating instructions, technical drawings, and cost estimates; (2) an abstract of 250 words for an international conference on Robots and Applications; (3) a formal business letter; and (4) a record of how the project work was divided up.

In France, students spent at least one hour of their three-hour class in the computer room working on the project. Language classroom activities were related to some aspect of the robotics theme in the three countries. In the classroom students watched videos on robots, wrote an abstract for an international conference proposal, reviewed robotics and technical English vocabulary, and practiced presentation skills and oral comprehension. The question of what good technical writing is was also discussed. Students were introduced to netiquette, word-processing, and e-mail skills.

In Finland, a glossary program was written and a class glossary in English, Finnish, and French was developed. Each team made a glossary test which was used in their final exam. During the first two weeks students received and commented on introductory letters or CVs from all of the students. After this the students communicated exclusively with the members of their team using e-mail for pure text, ftp for document transfers, and once or twice fax to send drawings.

A face-to-face exchange occurred during the sixth week of the project when the teacher from Finland attended a conference in Paris. She was able to have lunch with the French students and brought presents to them from her class.

The following is an overview of the term schedule:

Weeks 1 and 2:	Presentation of the project, brainstorming of possible real world problems needing a robotics solution, and sorting out the teams
Week 3:	Best ideas exchanged among the members of the international team
Weeks 4 to 9:	Work on the project
Week 10:	Final copies of the Team Portfolio
Week 11:	Oral Presentation
Week 12:	Course evaluations, testing, and announcement of winning team
Week 13:	Testing and course wrap-up

Evaluation

The global evaluation of this project from both students and teachers was positive. Students particularly emphasized their interest in meeting and getting to know students from other countries and their satisfaction with how much they had learned about computers and technology and how much they had improved their written English. They noticed the need for clarity when discussing written and technical subjects exclusively by e-mail and felt they had profited from working in a team on a project that was most certainly much more interesting and challenging than the typical English courses they had taken in the past. Everyone agreed the oral presentations were a valuable and necessary part of the project.

Two problems raised by the students were the lack of time and the failure of teammates to keep to the deadlines. Lack of time is indeed a factor in a term-long project like this. However, this can be ameliorated through weekly monitoring by teachers of e-mail traffic, ruthless insistence on keeping to deadlines, and teacher input on how to manage one's time and move forward.

A factor to consider in an international team project using e-mail is the delay in receiving messages from half way across the globe. The messages themselves go quickly enough, but some students did not reply frequently enough, nor did they always answer each other's questions. The limitations of computer access and variation in course scheduling can contribute to a great deal of frustration. Students need to be required to send short and frequent messages. Ideally all students should have classes twice a week and have computer access during normal lesson time and outside of normal class hours.

Contributors

Linda Thalman teaches French graduate students in engineering fields, continuing education and children. She has an M.A. in Linguistics/TEFL from Ohio University. Ruth Vilmi teaches undergraduate students of technology from many different disciplines. She has a Diploma in TEFL from London University.

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This project was part of the HUT E-mail Writing Project, a continuing series of English language international e-mail exchanges. For information about future exchanges, contact Ruth Vilmi.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITY

Context

This task-based activity involved international teams of university students from the USA, Hong Kong, and Finland; a business class from Mesa Community College, Arizona; technical students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and a Business English class from Helsinki University of Technology (HUT). The coordinators were Charles Lewis, George Jor, and Ruth Vilmi, respectively. The students from Mesa Community College were native speakers of English. The students in Hong Kong were ESL students, and those in Finland, EFL students. Most of the ESL/EFL students had been studying English for about ten years.

Description

This project divided students into international teams which were to work together via the Internet to compete in finding the best solution to a real world environmental problem. Each international team consisted of about eight students. Two teams had students from all three countries, and three of the teams had students from only Finland and the USA.

All the teachers planned the course in detail on a special teachers' mailing list created for this purpose at HUT. The project aims were discussed and the schedule and tasks carefully planned. Students were required to keep records of how the work was shared among team members. The international teams collected this information and included it in the final portfolio.

The aims of the project were for the participants to find a solution to a real world environmental problem; to present the solution orally, both to peers and outside visitors; to publish the final documents on the World Wide Web; to enjoy cross-cultural communication with students from other countries through team work; and to practice writing in English via e-mail.

Each team had its own private mailing list, created and maintained by Mika Silander of the HUT Language Centre, Finland. Thus, the students could send messages simultaneously to all the members of their team, without the members of the other teams seeing them. All students had easy access to computers.

The teams selected a problem area from the list below:

1. Nuclear power and toxic waste disposal
2. The automotive industry and exhaust pollution
3. Manufacturing and ground water contamination
4. The forest products industry and wildlife preservation
5. Airport development and noise pollution
6. The energy industry and oil spills

Their task was to present a portfolio presenting the problem they chose to focus on.

The minimum portfolio included:

1. Introductory letter or CV.
2. A report stating the importance of the problem to the long-term objectives of the company or the health of the industry involved
3. A three year plan showing what will need to be addressed during these years
4. A budget outlining what monies will be spent, when, and where
5. A technical report, recommending technical solutions to the problem
6. A 250-word abstract for the Call for Papers for "The Fifth International Conference on Improving the Environment" held in York, England from April 10th to 13th, 1995
7. A record of the division of labor
8. A short 250-word essay evaluating the course.

The first and last items of this portfolio were completed by each individual. Items two to seven were completed by teams.

It was agreed that some details, such as the procedure for choosing the best report and technical methods, would be discussed in each class and then shared with the international group. These procedures differed a little from country to country, but it was agreed that the deadlines should be the same for all classes. Each class decided to have oral presentations towards the end of term. The Finnish team had public presentations and invited other students and teaching staff from HUT and members of Nokia, an organization which had given a grant to the HUT E-mail Writing Project.

A summary of the schedule follows:

Week 1	The class is divided into teams who discuss and choose problems. The teams prepare initial introductory communication.
Week 2	In-class brainstorming sessions are coupled with an exchange of ideas with members abroad. Teams receive feedback and settle on the approach to defining, researching, and reporting on the problem.
Week 3	The teams finish agreeing on approach, methodology and basic outline of project. Individual assignments are made within each team.
Week 4	Team members begin the research task and stay in contact with foreign members. Documents go through peer review for comments and revision.
Week 5	The research and draft stage continues.
Week 6	The research and draft stage concludes.
Week 7	The final document is prepared. Students have two weeks to agree upon exact content and form of final report.
Week 8	Final report and recommendations are due.
Week 9	Oral presentations.

In the end, each class reviewed the final reports and voted for the best one. Results of the voting from each class were sent to the teachers' list and winners were announced on a special newsgroup created at HUT. The winning team received a virtual prize and all five reports were published on the World Wide Web at URL:

http://www.hut.fi/~rvilmi/autumn94/environment.html

Evaluation

All the students and teachers found this team activity rewarding but extremely demanding. Very good final reports were produced by all the teams, and a lot of hard, useful work was done researching and writing. The students spent a great deal of time and energy on the project — much more than is normally required for an 80-hour course.

A number of problems and conflicts occurred, which slowed progress. The students from Hong Kong were two weeks late starting. The Finns found it difficult to work with the Americans, as the Americans were interested in the actual processes involved in the discussions, whereas the Finns were focused finding real technical solutions. There were misunderstandings about deadlines, even among the teachers. None of the students wrote regularly enough, and they often wrote monologues, not responding carefully to the other students' questions. Some of the Hong Kong students' work was too late to be included in the final reports or in the presentations in Finland.

The students from Hong Kong wrote in-depth evaluations. Both these and the evaluations from Finland can be viewed on the WWW at URL:

http://www.hut.fi/~rvilmi/autumn94

Contributor

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THE INDIVIDUAL WRITING EXCHANGE

Context

Most participants in this ongoing exchange have been advanced and high intermediate level students of English as a Foreign Language at universities or other tertiary institutions. Some university students who speak English as a native language have also participated, as noted below. Current plans call for additional versions of the project for students of other European languages. The exchange is carried out as a part of regular academic course work.

Description

The Individual Writing Exchange is a system which encourages writers from differing rhetorical backgrounds to consider ways to make their writing more effective on the international stage. It is based on a three-week cycle in which students submit articles on significant topics to an international forum, then comment on articles about their chosen topic written by peers from other countries, and finally share their perceptions of what made for effective communication. These shared perceptions are formed into a criteria for effective writing which students can then use to revise their own articles or create more effective articles during subsequent cycles.

Articles for the project are shared via an Internet-friendly distribution system organized in mid–1994. Students send their messages by e-mail to a mailing list at the Helsinki University of Technology (HUT). The list forwards one copy of each message to the participating sites and each site deals with the further distribution internally. The universities have decided upon various systems according to their needs: local newsgroups, the Gopher, e-mail filters, and the World Wide Web.

The Individual Writing Exchange has been developed co-operatively by foreign language teachers on a special teachers' list started at the Helsinki University of Technology in 1993. The teachers and students are from many different countries including Egypt, England, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Korea, Norway, Russia, and the United States. Most of the students are enrolled at their universities in EFL/ESL courses, though some native speakers of English have also joined in order to experience serious discussion in an international setting. The participation of native speakers has been welcomed by the foreign language students since it broadens the international focus of the exchange.

The coordinating teachers from the participating sites select a set of topics for each 3-week cycle based on student interests and the number of students expected to participate during that cycle. The topics are chosen with an eye to eliciting the type of reflective writing often required in university liberal arts, social science, business, and technical courses. Students are encouraged to develop their arguments based on research (especially from electronic sources), though there is no expectation that the writing will be of the highly documented, dissertation style. The following is a set of topics which was used in April, 1995:

Technical Topics	General and Business Topics
Alternative Energy	Professional Sports
Nuclear Waste Disposal	Starting a Business
Technology of the Future	Multinational Companies
Controlling Urban Pollution	Racial and Ethnic Diversity
Intermediate Technology	Censorship of Television
Computer Art	Current Events
Robots of the Future	Euthanasia

Although the emphasis is on serious discussion of topics such as these, during introduction periods and between cycles, students are encouraged to participate in less formal "chatting" and to interact on a more personal level with students from other cultures. In addition, students cooperate to create culture pages. (For further information see "World Wide Web Culture Pages" in Part 3 of this volume.)

One university term likely includes three of the three-week cycles. Most teachers integrate the Individual Writing Exchange into their regular program of instruction. Students typically discuss their drafts with their classmates and form groups to analyze the articles on a specific topic. Often students prepare oral presentations summarizing a particular topic for their classmates who are following other threads. The developed criteria for effective writing are generally determined by groups of students working across topics. Students can also create a class glossary and glossary tests.

Evaluation

The Individual Writing Exchange is an ongoing project continually being developed based on student and teacher evaluations. At the end of each university term, students are expected to submit serious evaluations to the international forum. The designation of different topics for each three week cycle, for example, was suggested in a student evaluation.

The academic nature of this project requires that teachers consider it a significant portion of their course work and reflect the students' participation in their grades. Teachers must provide class time for discussion and analysis of the articles which appear. In addition, teachers must be able to participate in the ongoing development and documentation of the project.

Student evaluations at the end of each term are generally very positive. The following evaluation submitted by an Egyptian student is typical:

> "I am very glad that I am working on this e-mail project. Through this project, I have learned a lot of things. First, I have learned how to communicate with other persons who are in other countries, how to send messages and how to comment on the articles of other's. Second, it was very useful to read articles from different cultures and communities that differs from my own culture and to receive encouraging comments on my articles. Reading this variety of articles has attracted my attention to subjects that I have never known anything about before. Finally, working on my articles and searching for data for these articles was very useful to me and has encouraged me to read a lot about these subjects that I am writing on. In conclusion, it was a very good experience, and I enjoyed it very much. There is only one thing that I want

to suggest and that is to advertise about this project in order that everybody would know about it and be able to use it."

Contributors

Ruth Vilmi teaches undergraduate students of technology from many different disciplines. She has a Diploma in TEFL from London University. William T. Burns teaches in the Graduate School of Education and the General Education English Program of Sogang University in Seoul, Korea.

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THE CITIES PROJECT

Context

The participants in this cross-cultural e-mail project were students enrolled in university high-intermediate or advanced ESL writing classes.

Description

In the spring of 1994 I participated in the HUT E-mail Writing Project organized by Ruth Vilmi at the Helsinki University of Technology (HUT) which included twelve teachers and over 200 students. The Cities Project was one of the several spin-offs of this HUT project. Participating in the summer 1994 Cities Project were ESL classes from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia; New York University in New York City; and George Washington University in Washington, DC.

In the process of developing a tri-city guide, students in this project were to increase their writing fluency, develop their awareness of the need to write with a specific audience in mind, partake in an authentic writing experience with a real audience, and develop awareness of the need for accuracy when writing to others. In addition, the project was to familiarize students with the mechanics of e-mail, acquaint them with three American cities, and give them the opportunity to establish friendships with other ESL/EFL students that would perhaps be of a lasting nature.

Before the semester began, the dates for the beginning and the end of the project were determined and the course syllabi were prepared with the e-mail project an integral part of the course. Such e-mail projects cannot be appended to a course and be successful.

The teachers selected five content areas for the project: (1) Historical Places, (2) Special Places and Special Events, (3) Museums, (4) Restaurants, and (5) Our University.

At the beginning of the semester started, the students in each class were divided into five groups of three each. Their first task was to send self-introductions to their counterpart groups in the other cities.

Each group developed an outline for their section of the guide which they then circulated to the group members at the other two institutions to come up with a revised, common outline.

Each group then determined the specific assignments for each member. Each assignment entailed a visit to a particular location (e.g., a museum or restaurant) and a written description of the location. Students were encouraged to visit all of the locations as a group or at least to go in pairs.

When the preliminary drafts of the descriptions were finished by each local group, they were sent for feedback to the students in the other cities. These descriptions were then revised on the basis of the peer feedback. After the group members and the teacher had looked them over and made final suggestions, the descriptions were prepared for publication.

Each university sent one copy of its descriptions to the other institutions. Each teacher then put the three parts together and distributed a Tri-city Guide to all students.

The guide, therefore, was divided into three sections (New York, Washington, and Richmond) and each of these sections was further divided into five parts (historical places, special places and events, museums, restaurants, and universities).

In order to facilitate continued contact among the students, the guide contained a list of the students' names, their e-mail and snail-mail addresses, and their telephone numbers. The New York section of the guide also contained some photocopied pictures of students and places.

In addition to this framework of tasks, each group at each university sent a package of materials to its two counterpart groups by regular mail. Contents included student photos, postcards, tourist brochures, and information about the universities.

The students in Washington DC prepared a video. One of the students spent a week-end filming places in the city. His tape was edited by the class. A script was prepared to accompany the tape, and three students were chosen to do the voiceover. Copies of the video were sent to the classes in New York and Richmond. The students felt great pride in this accomplishment.

I participated in two additional Cities Projects in the Fall of 1994 and Spring of 1995 with a few variations.

While the first project involved only U.S.-based classes, the latter projects included classes in Hong Kong, Paris, and Trondheim, Norway. Reflecting the interests of the new participants, new topics were added such as Places of Natural Beauty, Security in Our City, Neighborhoods, Food and Fashion, and Student Life.

In place of the detailed tourist guide, which was the final product of the first project, the students in the second and third projects produced collections of descriptive essays about their cities. A guidebook was not deemed appropriate as it was not likely that the students would visit each other's cities in the near future.

The culture packages were expanded with the Norwegian students adding special items such as an Advent calendar with chocolates behind each window, Olympic pins, and an audiotape with the history of the town of Trondheim and some Norwegian songs prepared by the students. They inspired the other students to look for interesting cultural items.

Three of the five classes in the second project sent videos, but none in the third project did. While students enjoyed preparing and receiving videos, it is a very time-consuming project.

Finally, Sandra Foldvik, the teacher in Trondheim, introduced an innovation called The Thought Walk. She took her students on a walk away from their campus. As they walked, they observed what they saw and recorded it. When they returned to the classroom, they wrote up what they had seen and sent their essay to the students in the other cities (see Appendix). This feature became an integral part of the projects.

Evaluation

ADVANCE PLANNING

It is absolutely essential to plan the entire project before the semester begins. With people in different cities, communication may not be as instantaneous as one would wish. Therefore, careful planning in advance will preclude many problems along the way. In these projects much of the planning was done after the beginning of the semester.

NUMBER OF CITIES INVOLVED

The first group had universities in three cities participating. This number seemed to work very well. Five cities proved to be rather unwieldy. For two cities to work well, all of the students need to be active participants.

PHOTOS

Student photos should be exchanged among the groups as soon as possible in the semester. It cannot be over-emphasized how important it is to send photos. Actually seeing each other's faces improves the rapport among the students and facilitates their writing. The photos can be included in the snail mail culture packages or shared via the Internet by posting them on the World Wide Web.

NUMBER OF MESSAGES

Students should be strongly encouraged to correspond with their counterparts in the other cities. After all, this is the primary purpose of the project! Some students do very little communicating. What should be done about these students? This problem was discussed at length and the question of a required number of messages was considered. No satisfactory solution was found. Most teachers have not set mandatory numbers. In the third project, however, I required my students to send a minimum of thirty messages to their counterparts in Paris. I found that quality did in some cases deteriorate with quantity but felt that poor messages were probably better than no messages. Students become extremely frustrated when groupmates do not respond.

CORRECTION OF ERRORS

As these projects are communicative in nature, none of the teachers wanted to correct the grammar in their students' messages. It was distressing at times, however, to see grammatical errors so prominent in many of the messages. It was suggested that some of these error-ridden messages could be used for an occasional mini-grammar lesson.

VIDEO PRODUCTION

While most of the students enjoyed working on the production of the videos and were delighted to see the videos from the other cities, this activity took a considerable amount of class time. One possibility suggested was that the participating writing teacher ask the students' speaking and listening teacher to take over the task of preparing the video.

CULTURE PACKAGES

Receiving the culture packages was one of the highlights of the project. But the students in the first two projects were disappointed when there were too few items in the packages to share.

Therefore, in the third project it was stipulated that each package would contain something for each student.

FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES

Writing Practice

Students had the opportunity to improve their writing in authentic situations. They had a real need to offer and receive information from the other students. They became aware of the need for clarity and accuracy in the exchange of information.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Most students felt that they had learned something about other cities and other cultures although not in great depth. Perhaps ways could be found to strengthen this aspect of the project.

E-Mail Technology

The students learned to use e-mail very rapidly and most students seemed very enthusiastic about using this technology in the foreign language classroom. It added an exciting new dimension to the learning process.

The teachers were satisfied with these e-mail projects although it was felt that there was room for improvement.

No analysis of the students' writing has been completed to determine whether the writing improved during the projects; therefore, one cannot draw any verifiable conclusions. This analysis should be undertaken in the near future so that the positive feelings of the teachers can be verified.

In the meantime, one can readily see that a project of this kind does enhance the language learning process in that it provides students with authentic opportunities for writing and speaking in the target language, for increasing their knowledge of other cities and cultures, and for learning to use e-mail technology.

Contributor

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Appendix: A Thought Walk in Trondheim, Norway

Our walk took us behind the main building, through some woods with tall larch and pine trees, down a wide grit path to the fjord. Here are some of the things we noticed and which we hope will enable you to take a "thought-walk" with us, down to the sea.

Walking along the path, I hear some small birds singing from the very tops of the trees and I smell autumn from the wet leaves on the ground. Further down the path there are still some patches of snow. On the other side of the fjord, we see white, snow covered mountains.

Leaves rustle in the wind as we walk down to the boathouse. Inside there's the smell of newly painted boats and the good smell of tar from the old ones. There's snow on top of the mountains, but the ground is still green, spotted with gold from the leaves that have fallen to the ground.

A gentle wind brings with it the lovely fresh scent of wet autumn forest. It's good to hear the trickling sound of melting snow. It's too early for winter to stay!

The boat house, newly painted red, brightens up the grey autumn day. Despite the gentle wind, the sky is grey and it feels like autumn. The mild temperature makes the snow melt into water which runs from the road. The fjord is grey, and the sea moves gently under the boats. But the snow-capped mountains tell that winter has come.

As we come down to the sea, we hear wave-music as the waves come into the shore. There's the smell of seaweed, the sea is grey, the mountains across the sea are patched with snow. In the forest, leaves fall from the trees and the soil smells of autumn. There's a thick mat of yellow leaves.

We look forward to learning about your cities through the topics you have chosen.

Best wishes from all of us in Trondheim,
Ellen, Kay, Turid, Vibeke, Morten, Gunn Kari, Kristin, Ann Iren, Sigrun and Sandra

IMPORT/EXPORT E-MAIL BUSINESS SIMULATION

Context

The project described below was designed to be completed by teams of ESL students with an interest in business. It involves formation of virtual companies composed of students in two different countries who go through all the stages of researching and arranging an international import/export transaction. It has been successfully utilized by advanced-intermediate and advanced ESL students in Boston, Palestine (West Bank), Australia and Switzerland.

Description

The project is developed in four phases. Each phase has pre-written worksheets for teachers and students.

PHASE ONE

In phase one, we match students in pairs, one at each site. The objective on this phase is simply to explore using e-mail to exchange information. Since some of the students will have virtually no experience on the Internet, this phase is necessary to teach the basic e-mail skills, as well as to allow the students to learn about their trading partners.

PHASE TWO

In this phase we introduce the business theme. We ask them to investigate the local business scene to discover what the principal products of the local area are, and what goods and services produced in the local area are currently being exported. In order to again access to the necessary information, I directed my students to the main University library, the local Chamber of Commerce, the School of Management, and some online resources during this phase of investigation. Also in this phase we form the game teams, or "companies". Groups of 3–5 students at each site, making 6–10 total members for each team, are most managable. Whenever possible, pairs formed in phase one should be assigned to the same company.

PHASE THREE

This phase is the actual simulation. Gathering the information collected in phase two, teams will sit down and make a short list of goods or services which they think could be sold at a profit at the other site. They then e-mail this list to the other half of their team. Each group now investigates local market prices for the items their partners have suggested.Through exchange of e-mail and negotiation, they decide on one product to move in each direction. Each group will invest their entire $100,000 virtual dollars in a single product to be exported from site 1 to site 2, and another single product to import back from site 2 to site 1.

Once the teams have agreed on their products they must begin gathering the necessary information to complete the deal: purchase price, weight of shipment, packing and packaging costs, shipping options and costs, storage costs, duties to be paid, etc. Students are encouraged to think of all these expenses themselves.The team members at site two must try to find the best selling price possible (a price quote from a local supplier would be one way to establish selling price) as well as calculate and pay any import duties, transportation and storage costs.

Then they would take the resulting capital and invest in one product, following all of the steps outlined above, and send the return shipment back to site 1 where it would be "virtually" sold (after paying all attendant duties) and the resulting capital will be the fiscal end result of the simulation. Will it be more or less than the original $100,000? That is one of the fascinating questions which makes a simulation like this interesting to both students and teachers.

Evaluation

(Phase 4) Each team, working together at both sites, must prepare a report on their "company", the process they went through, what they learned, and what they would do differently the next time or in real life. Depending on each teacher's preferences and computer access, these reports could include spreadsheets, charts and graphs, official forms, and price quotes and/or presentations.

My personal evaluation is that each trial of this project was a success; although in some cases there was not enough time to complete the simulation, students were uniformly motivated and enjoyed using their English in realistic situations. Whether a profit was shown or not was less important than what the students learned about business English and the realities of Import/Export transactions.

Contributor

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WRITING STYLES PROJECT

Context

This interclass e-mail project involved 98 college and university students of ESL and English. It was conceived by James Heynderickx of Trinity College in Washington, DC; other participating teachers included Ron Corio, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, Virginia; Caroline Geertz, NOVA Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and David Tillyer, City College of New York (CCNY), New York City.

Description

The purpose of the project was to help students improve their written English and to foster intercultural exchanges. The students from VCU and CCNY were all non-native speakers of English (NNS). The NOVA class was composed of native speakers of English (NS) and NNSs. The Trinity students were all NSs of English.

Students formed writing groups by selecting one of ten styles of writing (see list below). This allowed students to choose the type or style of writing that interested them most, rather than write an essay on a topic selected by the teacher.

Participants wrote and exchanged short pieces in their selected writing style. The emphasis on short pieces was made to encourage early and more frequent writing exchanges. These short pieces could lead to a longer and multiple draft paper. In addition, students exchanged responses to pieces written by other members of their group. All exchanges were made within the group, using e-mail. Students were required to write at least one posting per week, an original piece or a response, to their group.

Students could hand in examples of their postings during the term or compile a portfolio of their four to five best postings at the end of the term.

At the outset, students were asked to make a first and second choice from these ten writing styles (genres):

Reviews	(film, TV, music, and books)
Debate	(issues and arguments)
Creative Writing	(fiction and poetry)
Journal Writing	(excerpts from each week)
Politics	(school, national, and international)
News Writing	(reports on class, school, city)
Nightlife	(readings, concerts, clubs, events)
Sports	(school teams, practice, wins/loses)
Jobs	(internships, part-time, after college)
Style	(fads, habits, clothes, hair, "look")

Groups were formed according to students' first choice of writing style. Imbalances in the size of groups were adjusted by moving some students to their style of second choice.

Students began with a letter of introduction and then shared short pieces of writing in their selected style. Each teacher in the project required that their students write a certain number of submissions to their groups and write a certain number of responses to their partners' submissions.

By selecting writing styles, instead of a writing topic, students might also make better use of the cultural exchange element of e-mail projects because they would have the freedom to write about anything that falls into their writing style category.

Heynderickx created a listserv for each of the above topics and subscribed students to their group. Another listserv was created for the teachers. Members of each group sent messages to the appropriate listserv, which then distributed them to the other members of the group. Some teachers joined the styles groups that included students from their classes. The listservs were convenient for sending messages to the groups and eliminated the need for students to create group mailing lists.

Evaluation

Shorter pieces encouraged more writing exchanges. Students in my class were required to write to their group once a week for eight weeks. They could submit their own piece or respond to another student's submission. Some students wrote more than required and some did not meet this requirement.

Giving students time to work on the project in class increased the number of exchanges. Positive comments from a teammate or teammates inspired students to write more. Typical of this type of project, the participation by each class varied. The cause of this was probably the amount of commitment by the particating teacher and the similarity of language level and course objectives.

The mixture of native and non-native speakers did not seem to pose any problems. I was concerned that the NNSs would be intimated by the NSs, but this did not appear to be a problem. Comprehensible input from the NSs was beneficial for the NNSs, and the NNSs benefitted from the confidence of participation in group work with NSs.

In future projects, I would continue the short writings and increase the number of assignments so that students were writing at least one contribution and one response to other contributions per week. It would also seem beneficial to provide students with sample readings of pieces in their genre. These could serve as models and would exploit the reading-writing connection.

Contributor

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A PROJECT-BASED APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S E-MAIL EXCHANGE

Context

These projects were used with Romanian children studying English as a foreign language. The issues discussed relate to e-mail exchanges with students of any language and level.

Description

BACKGROUND

Many teachers seem to feel that using e-mail for free individual communication between pupils is not a useful activity. However, many teachers have indicated that they have difficulty in creating suitable projects. This paper suggests that both kinds of activity are valid in a context of teaching English as a second language.

We use e-mail completely within a context of teaching English as a second language. However, none of our collaborators in other countries are working within this context; they are either general class teachers or have another speciality, e.g., Computer studies.

We are working with Romanian children in the age group nine to 14 years old. In theory they are in the second or third year of learning English. In reality, because of difficulties of introducing English more widely into the curriculum after the Revolution of December 1989, including shortage of English teachers, many of the children are effectively in their first or second year of learning English.

ORGANIZING PROJECTS

'Single event' and almost all longer term projects have been prompted by questions and answers in individual e-mail contacts. The method adopted, the goals and the time period, have been roughly the same whatever the subject. All have been based on comparing something in the children's native way of life, town, 'state' or culture with that of the children in another country. Some projects have been a collaboration with a single school in another country. Some have been three- or four-way collaborations, comparing three or four countries.

Some of the project titles are: The history of the state; The myths and legends of the region; The town in which the children live; Wild and domestic animals of the region; The county, state or definable region in which the children live; Some aspects of culture of the region.

The period of the projects has been determined by a number of practical factors and has varied between 5 and 8 weeks.

All the projects have had a material end goal: an 'exhibition' to which colleagues, teachers, parents and other guests will be invited.

The methodology is basically the same for any subject, as follows. At an initial session the children are divided into suitably sized groups. The motivation provided by individual personal communication via e-mail is such that in Romania there is no problem in getting children to come to extra 'classes' outside of normal school hours. Because these extra activities are voluntary for teachers and pupils alike, we have been able to set group size to be that most effective for the activity and the level of competence in English.

For the youngest with the least time learning English we have had three groups each of six to eight pupils, working simultaneously. For pupils with a higher competence in English we have had a single group of 12 to 16.

The children choose (after a lot of discussion and guidance) a subject which they prefer. A list is then made of particular aspects of this subject, one for each week of the project. A simple example is the comparison of a region of Romania (in this case the northern region known as the Bucovina) with a region of the other country (in this case of a two-way project, the Canadian province of British Columbia).

Each week each child prepares at least one question for the following week's subject. The questions are discussed and modified as necessary at the group session. The questions are then e-mailed to the collaborating school(s). For the following week each child must prepare a question for the following week's subject and the answer to his/her question for his/her region that has been sent that week. He/she must also look for published references and visual material to support his answers.

To make this clearer, here is a plan for the initial weeks of the project 'Compare aspects of life in the Bucovina with those in British Columbia'. There are eight children in the group.

WEEK 0

Project title agreed by group. Weekly aspect titles agreed by group (Week 1: days of celebration; 2: shopping; 3: agriculture; 4: towns and villages; 5: food). Prepare at home question(s) for week 1.

WEEK 1

Week 1 questions are discussed and agreed upon by the group and dispatched by e-mail. Questions: 1. Do you celebrate a women's day? (Nicoleta) 2. How do you celebrate Easter? (Ramona) 3. Do you have a children's day? If so, how do you celebrate it? (Niculina) 4. Do you have a workers' day? If so, how do you celebrate it? (Andreea) 5. How do you celebrate Christmas? (Florentina) 6. Do you have special foods for special days? If so what are they? (Miruna) 7. What other special days of celebration do you have in British Columbia? (Radu) 8. Do you celebrate Saints' days in British Columbia. If so which are the most important? (Vlad) Each child prepares at home an answer to his question for his home region, finding as much supporting material as possible. Each child prepares at home question(s) for week 2.

WEEK 2

Week 2 questions are discussed and agreed upon by the group and dispatched by e-mail. Extra questions received from collaborating school in other country are discussed and answers are agreed upon and dipatched by e-mail. Answers prepared by children to their own questions are discussed and agreed upon and dispatched by e-mail. Each child prepares at home an answer to his week 2 question, finding as much supporting material as possible. Each child prepares at home question(s) for week 3.

Space limitations prevent description of all the activities but the opportunities presented by this type of project should be clear.

As stated previously, many of the projects have developed from individual communication—'keypalling'. Also, information collected by individual members of the group in their personal communications can be incorporated into the projects.

Individual keypalling benefits greatly from some organisation. For example, we have a system to ensure that all messages are replied to in one way or another and that all questions are answered, etc. In a TESL context we would recommend strongly that you begin with individual keypalling and try to maintain it after more structured projects have begun. The reasons for beginning with and maintaining individual keypalling are discussed in our article "Organising primary school pupils for e-mail as a TESL aid" earlier in Part 2 of this book.

Evaluation

We now have experience with both free individual communication and guided projects, though many of the latter have yet to be completed at the time of writing. Our initial conclusions may be of interest.

In general, the greater the competence in the second language, the larger the project group can be and remain effective in terms of complete participation. 'Single event' projects can sustain a relatively larger group; longer term projects work better with relatively smaller groups.

In general, the motivation from guided projects is not so high as with individual communication, but a large measure of it is retained when the project groups are made up of pupils known to each other as individual keypals.

Many, if not all, of the opportunities for language improvement described in "Organising primary school esl pupils for e-mail as a tesl aid" were taken in these projects. The observed results have been broadly similar. The additional opportunities for useful group work with occasional teacher assistance and intervention are perhaps obvious.

A great advantage of using e-mail as the basis for this type of project is the personal content of the cultural information received and its currency (some Romanian preconceptions about England come from Dickens!). For Romania one very big advantage is project input which would otherwise be very difficult to obtain because of the lack of reference material. Others are perhaps also more relevant to Romania than some other countries and native languages. These are the repeated practice in formulation of questions in English, the necessity for working in an organised environment and imposing some self organisation, and the opportunities for stimulating creative thinking.

Contributors

Roger Livesey was a freelance journalist for 30 years and an independent marketing consultant for 20 years before coming to Romania as a volunteer in early 1993. He teaches voluntarily at several schools in the town of Suceava and is the voluntary representative of World Youth Network, a charity based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Emanuela Tudoreanu is the English teacher for children in the e-mail groups at Group School No.1 in Suceava, and assists Mr. Livesey voluntarily with e-mail projects at other schools.

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PROJECT IDEALS: SOCIAL INTERACTION AND NEGOTIATION VIA CROSS-CULTURAL SIMULATION

Context

This Internet-based simulation involved university students of English as a foreign language and other subjects in 14 countries.

Description

Project IDEALS (PI) was a large-scale, multi-institution, computer-mediated simulation. PI stood for Promoting an International Dimension in Education via Active Learning and Simulation. It was a three-year project and each PI course lasted for a semester. Participants included not only students in English, but also political science, computing, environmental studies, psychology, business, etc.

In spring 1993, there were 27 teams from 14 countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Latvia Netherlands, Russia, Spain and USA) representing 20 hypothetical or synthetic (simulation) countries and 7 NGO groups (non-government organizations such as environmental protection agency, media and group of consultant experts). Country teams were each given a set of statistical data and a brief description of the country's situation and major concerns. These descriptions concerned general economic and social indicators and specific data related to ocean matters and resources (e.g., territorial sea, fish catch). Each country team had to chair a TNC (Treaty Negotiation Committee) and to propose the first draft of their part of the final treaty, a treaty governing the management of the oceans' resources, somewhat similar in scope to the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Simultaneously, each team, which was also a member of each of the TNCs, had to provide input for the drafts and to participate in the discussion and conferences.

The project IDEALS course in Spring term 1993 contained three main phases:

1. A 3-week preparation in which each participating team was required to write a public general policy statement for the world and a private position paper for internal reference and for the director of the simulation.
2. A 7-week simulated rounds of negotiations, which included:
    - Asynchronous conferences through daily message exchange;
    - Two synchronous / real-time plenary conferences, chaired by the simulation director, which brought together all country teams to discuss issues of general concern;
    - Committee real-time conferences, initiated and chaired by any TNC, open to every team; and
    - Closed real-time conferences, initiated and chaired by any team, to discuss any "private" issues for selected member teams.
3. A 3-week debriefing, which consisted of two debriefing real-time conferences for most teams (and a face-to-face conference with all teams in Hong Kong) for a critical appraisal of the learning experience and other follow-up activities to consolidate what

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students had learnt about negotiation skills, cultural differences, international problems, etc. in the simulation.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

The above Chinese motto best pinpoints the value of simulations for language learning. Simulations can free language learners from the traditional silent role of passive receivers. As our students took up the role of high delegates, they had more incentive to take initiative and greater responsibility for their own learning. They were doing something important and representing not only themselves, but also their country. They discovered that the teacher would not dominate the discussion and was not the only source of knowledge. The teacher mainly acted as the facilitator, whose job was to "work closely with the team, providing support on all aspects of the simulation, both technical and personal" (Facilitator's Manual, p. 3). The audience of this project was neither the teacher nor the classmates. The real audience was the students overseas. Each learner had an influence on the others. They could make progress only by sharing with their peers.

Evaluation

Following the project, three three debriefing teleconferences were held. It was agreed that the students in the project had gained in the following ways:

1. Writing skills — how to express ideas clearly; how to be more polite in writing;
2. Communication skills — how to deal with frustration arising out of miscommunication; how to be more diplomatic in communication with other countries; how to deal with various and sometimes contradictory opinions and how to seek compromise;
3. Technical skills — telnet, e-mail, uploading & downloading, etc.; and
4. Concepts and knowledge — in areas such as international relations, international law, and the environment

Three main problems were also discussed: (1) the size of the project — too big resulting in too heavy workload and difficulty to unite teams to hold successful negotiation; (2) technical problems due to the speed of the Internet, and the time lag due to off-screen discussion; and (3) uneven participation and commitment of students.

From the review essays and other forms of evaluation, the project was found to have other benefits. Most of the Hong Kong students reported that they had developed more language awareness. They had more understanding in how good or weak their English standard was, as compared with both their teammates and student participants overseas. Also, they became more sensitive to the purpose and the audience of writing. They became sensitive to the choice of words, the tone and the style in formal writing. They developed a higher ability to integrate various passages of different writing styles into one formal document. Some students reported improvement in their scanning and skimming skills, too. As a lot of group work and discussion was involved, they also gained confidence in speaking up in class and in defending their individual standpoints.

In conclusion, projects such as PI can greatly enhance international communication. The task of drafting TNCs can help students to develop their writing skills and negotiation skills. The conflicts between teams and inside a team itself will improve students' communication skills. Computer teleconferencing will provide a very good chance for obtaining direct feedback, making clarifications, and gaining consensus on various issues. The project has laid down a good foundation for planning simulations of a similar kind for Asian countries or for setting up of similar projects elsewhere.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CARRY OUT SUCH A PROJECT

Simulations can now be organized more effectively using e-mail, newsgroups and the World Wide Web. There should be three stages: briefing, simulation activities, and debriefing. In stage one, each country team drafts and publishes position papers on the Web and the policy statement in a local class newsgroup for internal reference. Stage two can be sub-divided into three rounds: Round One for the Draft Treaty, Round Two for the Final Treaty and Round Three to ratify. Negotiation among teams can be done via e-mail, or e-mail groups. (With e-mail programs like Eudora or Nupop, it is very flexible and easy for any team or student to set up mini discussion groups with any country or groups of delegates.) The intra-class or group communication can be enhanced by e-mail or a special newsgroup. Synchronous conferencing can, to a certain extent, be replaced by IRC (Internet Chat Relay). The teacher can set up a special channel on the IRC and inform other delegates the date, time, and agenda through e-mail.

Class organization can be varied. Each team can be divided into several working committees, with each responsible for some parts of the treaty.

Assessment can be carried out by three parties:

1. The teacher — based on students' writings, class observations, e-mail and informal contacts outside the class meetings.
2. Fellow students — since team work is dominant throughout the course, students can be asked to reflect on one another's participation and performance in group work and suggest grades for their team mates.
3. The students themselves — the students are required to submit a personal portfolio of messages and documents written in the course so as to reflect their progress and performance, and to suggest grades they think they deserve.

Contributors

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MOO-LA-LA: CONVERSING IN VIRTUAL PARIS

Context

The activities listed below could be implemented at a variety of levels from first semester French language classes through graduate-level literature courses.

Description

MOOs are computer software applications that allow multiple users to connect together in a text-based, virtual reality environment and to interact with each other verbally using their keyboards. They allow you to manipulate objects that the MOO programmers or other users "place" there, and most allow you to program your own objects.

MOOs provide a variety of benefits to foreign and second language students. Because they are designed for interpersonal communication, they give students a chance to practice their language skills. MOOs are very interactive. Once you start conversing, you receive feedback from other MOOers, and this promotes discourse. All communication is done through the keyboard, but the text has a conversational style.

MOOs can be very life like. For example, just as in RL (Real Life), when you enter a room full of people, you smile and say "Hello." You can shake hands, talk to everyone in the room or just to certain people, or even whisper so that only one person can hear you. But MOOs can also provide a level of fantasy, which leads to greater diversity in the vocabulary used. For example, students may decorate their virtual hotel rooms to be a swimming pool, a golf course, or a garden. The very idea of connecting to a virtual Paris, touring its many venues, and conversing with other MOO characters requires the use of imagination.

To connect to the French MOO, telnet to:
daedalus.com 8888

Some possible classroom activities using the French MOO are:

- Hold office hours on the MOO. Students can connect and ask questions in your MOO "office."
- Hold conversation hours on the MOO. You can assign various groups to different MOO rooms based on the topic of conversation. If students wish to remain anonymous to other students, they can connect with a character name different than their real name. (Of course, for grading purposes, they must tell you their code name!). This activity can be used with lower-division through graduate-division classes. Lower level classes can practice conversation on the MOO, and graduate literature classes could hold more in-depth literary discussions.

- Log conversations on the MOO to a text file, then print it as a document through your word processor. You can discuss the conversation in class, and then have the students correct or improve the conversation as an assignment.
- For individual study and reading practice, students can connect to the MOO at their convenience. You could assign tasks such as "Navigate from the Chatelet metro to the casino in the Eiffel Tower." To be sure that students complete the assignment, you could require them to write a brief paragraph (en francais!) describing what they saw during their outing.
- Another individual study option is to have students connect for a certain amount of time per week. Then have them keep a journal of their activities and encounters with other players. They could send this to you via MOOmail or regular e-mail.
- You could ask students to create their own room on the MOO, and then to describe it in French. (This task can be completed without any programming knowledge.)

Evaluation

MOOs give language learners valuable opportunities to converse meaningfully with native speakers or other language students and teachers. On the French MOO I have spoken with American, Canadian, Belgian, and French participants. Few classrooms are able to provide this level of meaningful communication, so the MOOs provide extra opportunity for students to practice language skills. For students who are reluctant to speak in a classroom, due to shyness or fear of mispronouncing new words, the anonymity of the MOO can provide them opportunities to converse without being in the classroom spotlight. The MOOs are also fun and addictive. You may find your students spending a lot of time on the MOO, thus gaining more time on task studying the target language.

MOOs will not be a replacement for other language teaching methodology, but can motivate students to spend more time on the language learning task. They also provide an opportunity that many students of French lack — the opportunity to converse meaningfully with other language students and native speakers.

Contributor

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SchMOOze UNIVERSITY: A MOO FOR ESL/EFL STUDENTS

Context

This activity can be used with all levels of ESL and EFL students.

Description

SchMOOze University was established in July, 1994 as a place where students of English as a second or foreign language could meet and engage in real time conversations. Although there are many MUDS and MOOS, schMOOze was the first designed with the non-native English speaker in mind. The layout was purposely kept simple and bells and whistles were kept to a minimum. In addition, schMOOze was not advertised publicly in order to try to keep it a small, safe, friendly place. Besides chatting, students can use the USENET feed and Gopher server. An online dictionary is also available.

To date, schMOOze has 217 registered members representing the following countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Peru, Australia, Hong Kong, Norway, Malaysia, Thailand, United States, Mexico, Italy, United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Ecuador, Taiwan, and Finland. Although people can be found logged on 24 hours a day, the busiest times are from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m Eastern Standard Time.

Teachers can also use the virtual campus facilities. Three classrooms are available complete with tables and blackboards. Rosters can be established so that only students "registered" for a particular class can enter the room.

Evaluation

SchMOOze has been more successful than had been anticipated. The students who have logged on have quickly mastered the basic MOO commands and have shown great interest in obtaining and decorating their own rooms in the dormitory. However, I think the words of Li Chi Wai Ann, a student at the City University of Hong Kong, best expresses the feelings of the users of schMOOze.

> "Remember the first time John brought me to MOO in class last semester, I was so excited and I think I started to get crazy about the Moo at that time. What a wonderful place! I can meet different people from different places and 'talk' to them through computer. It is amazing, isn't it? People can talk with you although they are far away from you in real life.
>
> "Through talking with people there, you can know more about the culture, life style, custom and habits of other nations or countries if you really want to get such information. Besides, you can get as many friends as you want there and the only thing you have to do is to show your sincerity of making friends with others.
>
> "Keep the friendship through talking in MOO only? No, of course not. Actually, after communicating with people in MOO, you can go further with your friends in MOO, maybe you can ask for their e-mail addresses or their postal addresses, then they can also be your penpals.
>
> "But there is a difference between e-mail penpalling and Mooing. You will find that it is much easier to catch your friends' feelings through conversation than through e-mail because even if you misunderstand

some points, your friends can correct you immediately and you can avoid harming the friendship by misunderstanding."

Contributors

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Appendix: Connecting to schMOOze

To connect to schMOOze, telnet to:
arthur.rutgers.edu 8888

When you see the logon on your screen, type:
CONNECT GUEST
and follow the prompts.

More information about schMOOze and MOOing in general can be found on the schMOOze homepage on the World Wide Web:
http://arthur.rutgers.edu:8888/

MUNDOHISPANO: A TEXT-BASED VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNERS AND NATIVE SPEAKERS OF SPANISH

Context

MundoHispano is a combination language-learning environment and meeting place for anyone wanting to "speak" Spanish in this text-based virtual reality. Targeted users are honors high school, university, and adult learners, and native speakers of Spanish. Intermediate language level or above is expected, although some novice-level users may benefit as well.

Description

A MOO is a telnet-accessible text-based virtual environment in which synchronous communication takes place between "players" logged on at the same time. "MOO" stands for "MUD, object-oriented." A MUD is a multiple-user domain. The domain, or environment, is created by players who use MOO programming, which normally is in English, to write text that describes objects such as characters, rooms, and things. The players may interact with and manipulate the objects, or they may simply "talk" with each other in the created spaces. This latter capability appears to be most motivating to students.

Simple commands allow players to discover who else is currently logged on, to name and describe themselves, to communicate with other players, and to write text conveying non-linguistic cues such as emotions, physical appearance, and actions. MOOs have been described as an interactive novel written and read by the novel's characters. These creative possibilities contribute significantly to the motivation to write.

Our experience with using MOO in foreign language classes has demonstrated that it is the ability to connect with native speakers and other second language learners that is the most appealing aspect of MOO. Just like tourists or students who form friendships in a foreign country, the users of foreign language MOOs find that it is the interrelationships and the sense of belonging to a community that motivates them to return to an environment where use of the local language is not necessarily easy.

Here at Syracuse University we are building the first (as of this writing) Spanish language MOO, MundoHispano. All public spaces are written in Spanish by native speakers, private spaces are written by their owners (many of whom are students), and all programming language seen and used by players will be in Spanish. The current environment is a virtual replica of well-known parts of Madrid, although players are encouraged to build other cities from the Spanish-speaking world. Just as in any large Spanish-speaking city, few people will speak in English, and it is only in the Oficina de Turismo that you can expect to find English-speaking helpers.

Online help in Spanish and English will be available, and once the MOO is fully operational, players can generally expect to find others logged on who will be willing to help. Maps of the MOO and other useful information will be found in the Oficina de Turismo.

Teachers, students, and native speakers of Spanish are welcome to log on at any time. To get to MundoHispano, telnet to *io.syr.edu* 8888 and connect as a guest. No password is needed. Basic commands are found on the login screen. To see a more complete set of commands and ideas for the language teacher, refer to the following article, "What can we do in a MOO?"

Evaluation

As MOO is in its infancy, much research remains to be done on its efficacy. Preliminary observations of and by learners of English indicate that it motivates them to use language for periods of time well beyond normal teacher expectations. They find that they must read and think quickly in the target language, but that they have just a bit more time for composing their thoughts in their typed MOO conversations than in normal speech. Knowing that their writing will be seen by all in the room, they do their best to write with correct grammar and spelling. They also benefit from interactions with native speakers who are using authentic language.

Some minimal keyboarding skills are necessary, but can be developed quickly if the MOO is used frequently. Some students find the conversations to be too rapid-fire and confusing, especially if there are more than two players in a room. Others find that MOO is so attractive that it takes up a lot of time which they need to devote to their studies. Indeed, the psychological aspects of online relationships needs much further study. In the meantime, this medium has proven to be an enjoyable tool for language learning for a good number of the students introduced to it.

Contributor

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WHAT CAN WE DO IN A MOO?: SUGGESTIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Context

The following activities can be carried out with students of ESL, Spanish, French, and many other foreign languages. They are based on foreign language learning MOOs, which are virtual environments in which second-language learners, gather to "talk" with each other and with native speakers of a given language in an environment created, to a great extent, by the users themselves.

Description

MOO stands for MUD, Object-Oriented. A MUD is a multiple-user domain. Foreign language learning MOOs are telnet-accessible text-based virtual environments in which synchronous communication takes place between "players" who are logged on at the same time (for a more detailed description, see the previous article on MundoHispano). Their designers may program into the MOO such enhancements as online language games, numerous rooms to explore, Gopher access, classroom facilities, authorable grammar, and a vocabulary games, books and dictionaries. Over time, MOOs become populated with users who eventually form virtual communities where those who return on a regular basis have their own rooms (which they are free to decorate as they please), form friendships with other regular users, and contribute creatively to the formation of a small society of language learners.

Following are suggestions for teachers who choose to use MOO as a part of regular course work:

1. Become familiar with MOO. Log onto a MOO, get to know the people there, get a permanent character, describe yourself, set your gender, dig and describe a room, and spend enough time to understand the social dynamics of the MOO.
2. Talk to your students about MOO before they log on the first time. Be sure they understand that it may appear to be a game, but that they will be communicating with real people who are logged on from anywhere in the world. Remind them to be respectful of others.
3. Give your students clear written instructions. Although there is excellent help online, relatively simple tasks like accessing that help may prove daunting, especially for the ESL/EFL learner as MOO code and help files are in English.
4. If possible, have other proficient MOO users in the computer lab when you take them to the MOO for the first few times. If this is not possible, arrange to have others online when your students first log on.
5. Encourage them to write while in the MOO. Some students, especially those whose keyboarding skills are minimal, may want only to read (lurk). They need to see what happens when they enter commands to communicate or to move around the MOO.
6. Be prepared to lose control of your class, at least online. Computers networks distribute power away from the teacher, and students are likely to do whatever occurs to them.

7. Set up tasks for the students to accomplish over a period of time. Many will not return to the MOO, and thus not become practiced enough to take advantage of the learning opportunities, unless required to do so. Some possibilities:
    - Interview other MOOers. They should have a wide variety of non-native and native speakers of all ages and cultural backgrounds from which to choose. They can write a separate report, or, with permission, log, print out, and hand in an online interview.
    - Gather information and write a report for class. This could be information about the people or about the MOO itself.
    - Do a language hunt. Students converse with a variety of people and take notes on new vocabulary and expressions. Any number of projects could be developed out of the collected data.
    - Build rooms in response to an in-class reading. Students can recreate on a MOO any environment they read about.
    - Hold a party on the MOO, invite other online friends. Rooms can be built and decorated to suit those throwing the party.
    - Start a MOOmail correspondence with someone you met on the MOO. Students first find someone to write to, then exchange messages via MOOmail, supplemented with real-time conversations, and then write a report or story based on the interchange.

Evaluation

From preliminary reactions of students who have done many of the tasks listed above, it appears as though most find MOOs a motivating language-learning tool. Most felt that it helped them to improve primarily their reading, writing, and keyboarding skills. Some reported that their speaking skills were improved because the language used is akin to spoken discourse. Several mentioned the ability to learn current idiomatic usage. All who thought they might be becoming addicted to using the MOO found by semester's end that they were able to cut back or stop entirely with no problem.

What do the students have to say about using MOO?

> "I am having a great time using MOO for English language learning. In only 2 weeks I have many MOO friends from all over the world. Some of them are English lecturers, native students and foreigners..."
>
> "I believe that using MOO for English language learning is great idea. First of all, learner cannot be bored by using MOO. It is very exciting. We can be anyone or anything in the program. It will give us different point of view to learn English, like a learning other language is not always painful and hard."
>
> "MOO is a very useful tool for learning English because you have to read all the conversation in English and you have to read it fast. This can force you to think in English not in your own language. It also helps you to save time to read your books because your reading skill has been improved by reading the conversation on the MOO..."
>
> "I think MOO is really helpful for students like us to learn English. By typing, there is more time to think about what you are going to say. When I talk, I know that sometimes I just say whatever that comes up in my mind and often I use wrong word or grammar is wrong. Also it helps to learn spelling."
>
> "...They also can learn some vocabulary from other students, especially native speakers. Students also have a tendency to write a sentence grammatically because all students can see what she or he write on the screen. This motivation at least lead students to learn English more thoroughly."

The following is taken directly from a MOO conversation with a 20-year-old native speaker of English whose name at schMOOze University is "Dreamy."

Dreamy says "I really think that the concept here is great and very effective... I enjoy talking to foreign students...I've never had so much contact with so many interesting personalities."

You say "May I quote you in my paper? You just said something very interesting about why native speakers like to come here."

Dreamy says "Sure, I would be honored."

Contributor

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Appendix A: Foreign and Second Language MOOs:

FrenchMOO	*daedalus.com* 7777
Little Italy	*ipo.tesi.dsi.unimi.it*4444
MundoHispano	*io.syr.edu* 8888
MOOsaico (Portugese)	*moo.di.uminho.pt* 7777
schMOOze University (ESL)	*arthur.rutgers.edu* 8888
Virtual Classroom (German, French, Spanish, English)	*sol.uvic.ca* 6250

Additional foreign langauge MOOs may be found on the World Wide Web at:
http://www.pitt.edu/~jrgst7/MOOcentral.html.

Appendix B follows....

Appendix B: Some Basic MOO Commands

If you want to...	type...
log onto a MOO	*connect guest*
find others on the MOO	*@who*
join a player (where *player* is replaced by the name of the participant you want to join.)	*@join player*
look at the rooms you enter	*look here*
look at yourself	*look me*
look at other players (where *player* is replaced by the name of the participant you want to look at.)	*look player*
talk to someone in a different room (where *player* is replaced by the name of the player or participant you want to talk to.)	*page player*
whisper to someone in the same room (where *message* is replaced by the text of what you want to say and *player* is replaced by the name of the person you want to say it to)	*whisper message to player*
talk to someone in the same room	*message*
express actions and emotions (where a *subjectlessmessage* is replaced by a subjectless sentence in the third person)	: *subjectlessmessage*
use help files	*help*
log out	*@quit*

VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS: UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA'S VCR MUSH

Context

This software program is presently being used to teach university-level language and culture courses. So far it consists of four sections: German, French, Spanish, and English. Although the program is located at University of Victoria, it can be accessed and used by any teachers or students at the university or secondary level.

Description

MUSH is a program which allows multiple users to meet and interact in real time in a text-based environment. An almost unlimited number of people can connect to the MUSH via their computers and talk to each other. What you input immediately appears on the other users' screens. Since this MUSH focuses on education, we called it VCR MUSH, which stands for 'Virtual Classrooms'.

Apart from talking to each other and working together, the MUSH also allows the users to take advantage of a fully integrated e-mail system, so you can send and retrieve messages on an individual basis (just like you do with regular e-mail) or you can post messages on the "Bulletin board" in the "Post Office" if you want everybody to read them.

The exciting aspect of this program is that you can meet and work with students from anywhere in the world. You pick the language section which is appropriate for your class and choose a room to work in. When you move from room to room, you will see a description of what each room looks like and who else is presently in that room with you. The German section, for example, consists of various classrooms, a library, a post office, a coffee-shop, a beach, a park, a cinema, and a disco. In these rooms, you will find objects to look at or use, and texts to read. For example, in the "Café Treff," there is an entertainment corner with news, poems, short texts, jokes, and other items of interest, and in the cinema you'll find movie reviews and a popcorn machine.

Some of the rooms have been designated as classrooms which can only be used for specific classes. Your students will receive a password with which to enter their classroom. Since anybody can connect to the MUSH, we thought this was necessary to ensure that nobody intrudes on your class. Right now, the classrooms are ready to be 'furnished', i.e., teachers can set up their own learning environment, which will be designed according to the needs of their course. If you want to work inside the MUSH and want your own classroom, all you have to do is send me a description via e-mail and I will create a room for you and input the material you want to use.

It wouldn't be a virtual reality, though, if students could only come here to work. Since the MUSH is open 24 hours a day and can be accessed from anywhere in the world, students can also meet in their spare time and go to the Kino Capitol and talk about movies, stroll in the park, meet in the coffee shop, and go to the Disco. And to make the illusion complete, the MUSH is constantly changing and expanding. Rooms can be built, objects created, and materials deposited. The easiest way to accomplish this is for students to send room descriptions to their instructor or some other designated person, who will then create them.

To get an idea of what the MUSH is really like and what can be done with it, it would be best if you could drop in and check it out for yourself. You will immediately see the potential of this setup for language teaching and all sorts of cultural studies courses.

Connecting to the MUSH:

1. Sit down at your terminal and connect to your mainframe-account.
2. When you are in, type the following:
   telnet sol.uvic.ca 6250

   Be sure to leave a space between *telnet* and *sol* as well as between *ca* and *6250*. This works for most configurations; if it does not, send me a message with a detailed description of the problem.
3. If you see this on your screen — *Holding* — press your CLEAR-key.
4. Once you are connected to the MUSH, you have to create your own character. Type:
   create yourname yourpassword

   (where *yourname* is replaced by the name you wish to be known by on the MUSH and *yourpassword* is replaced by the password you wish to use). Example:
   create Victor 123

   We recommend that you use your real name so people know how to reach you inside the MUSH if they want to send you e-mail.

That's basically it; you've entered Virtual Reality. The first thing you will see is a description of the "room" you're in, including "obvious exits" and "contents" (whoever or whatever else is in the room with you). It is best to go on the Novice Tour to become familiar with the most important commands and also to describe yourself. By describing yourself you will be determining what the other players will see when they look at you. And if you get stuck, just type *help* and you'll get the help menu. To see who else is connected, type *WHO*, and to disconnect type *QUIT*. Both of these commands should be written in all capital letters.

Evaluation

During the initial test-phase, students from the Universities of Victoria, B.C., and Trier, Germany, met once a week in the MUSH. Since the program was only available a few weeks into the term, and since the time difference between Canada and Germany did not allow for the MUSH to be an integral part of the already scheduled class times, students met on a voluntary basis with supervision.

The students from UVic were mostly third-year German students and the students from Trier were taking English. The idea with this setup was that the students would communicate about half an hour in English and then half an hour in German. As it turned out, students stayed connected for an average of two hours! During those meetings, students were either free to explore whatever topics they wanted or they discussed prepared materials. For example, students sent essays and reports (the topic of which had been agreed upon by the two instructors) via e-mail to the instructor of the other class a couple of days before the meeting. These were then distributed to individual students. Using a peer evaluation format, students discussed their partner's work and expanded the topic during their connect-time.

Another form of assignment was deposited material. I took clips from the 'German News'-service and other sources on the Internet, and put them in designated rooms. During class, students discussed these texts with their counterparts and formulated central points that they wanted to expand on. Since it is relatively easy to import text from the Internet, the kind of information that can be used is virtually limitless. Compared to a textbook, it is also as topical as you want it to be. And if you are teaching a grammar course, you can, of course, also deposit grammar exercises or vocabulary lists, which can be used for role-playing.

The reaction so far has been enthusiastic from both sides. I am looking forward to fully integrating the MUSH into some of my courses next term.

Contributor

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A VIRTUAL TREASURE HUNT:
EXPLORING THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL ASPECT OF MOOS

Context

This activity is designed for intermediate or advanced ESL students who are either already enjoying MOO use or who are about to be introduced to it. Similar activities could be designed for other languages using one of the many foreign language MOOs now being developed (see "What can we do in a MOO?" earlier in this section).

Description

A large number of students at the self-access centre here use "schMOOze University", a MOO set up for ESL students which can be accessed by telnetting to:

arthur.rutgers.edu 8888

Briefly, a MOO is a text based virtual reality stopover on the Internet. Students communicate with others from around the Internet in real time and, more importantly, on their own terms. It is an excellent resource, not only allowing authentic and interesting communication between learners but also providing a safe opportunity to practice. Students who wouldn't dream of talking to a stranger in a real life situation because they feel too shy, are happy to chat away with others from the security of their classroom.

The MOO treasure hunt was designed with a number of things in mind. One feature of schMOOze that seemed to be undervalued by my learners was its three-dimensional aspect. I wanted students to learn how to wander around the MOO, exploring and reading descriptions, as well as talking to their friends. In addition, students here come from a variety of cultures and some prefer to learn how to be autonomous more slowly. I didn't wish to exert any control over these students in their MOO use but I did wish to offer them some more guided activity, appropriate to the medium, and encourage them to explore on their own. A final goal of the treasure hunt was to bring the students' attention back to the facilities around them (e.g., the dictionaries and grammar books that abound in the schMOOze Self-Access Centre) and thus help students relate schMOOze to their classroom learning.

A major delight of MOOs is that users can contribute to their form. It is not difficult to write MOO descriptions and create objects within them. So, for example, my "room" in schMOOze, I described as "a large airy room with a big window" by typing a command and a description. Students rooms are much more interesting!

To write the treasure hunt, I created twelve virtual pieces of paper (notes), wrote on them, and then dropped these virtual notes in particular virtual locations. Players can then see the notes as part of the location description and read them. For example, the player enters a room and sees on his screen:

```
A large airy room with a big window. You see Clue No. 3 here.
```

When the player types *read* Clue No. 3 they are shown:

```
************************************************************************
         TREASURE HUNT - CLUE No. 3
Well done! You must be tired after climbing all those stairs. Please
feel free to take a drink from the fridge. Now, to find the next clue,
you must leave this room and go up the stairs to the roof. Be careful up
there.
************************************************************************
```

The Treasure Hunt, as it stands, consists of 12 notes dotted around schMOOze campus. Each note consists of direct instructions on how to find the next one (e.g., Go north to the Fountain and look there) and a word. When the player has found all 12 clues, they have 12 words which they then have to put into order to make a possible sentence in English. I used a phrase consisting mainly of adjectives so that students would probably need to look up Order of Adjectives in the nearest grammar book. Once they have constructed the sentence, it then is mailed to me via MOO mail, a kind of internal e-mail system. The Treasure Hunt starts by the schMOOze entrance gates, where most players arrive when they first log in.

The first clue also gives instructions on what to do when they have finished. From there the players need to walk around the virtual campus, following directions and reading the clues as they find them. Players can still communicate with other MOO users. They can leave the treasure hunt and return to it at a later date. A couple of the clues encourage them to use the MOO zone that they find themselves in before continuing.

A major problem for me was that, were I to do this in a real situation, I would have some chocolate handy as a prize. The provision of a cyber-prize seemed to me to be important! This was solved by Julie Falsetti, schMOOze's creator, who suggested an ASCII drawing of a trophy, and Greg Younger, a teacher in Colorado, who created a great piece of ASCII art (but not as tasty as chocolate!)

Evaluation

The benefit of such an activity is that it encourages students to read the fine text descriptions and to move around in the MOO. Enabling students to use virtual realty should add to what can be done in the classroom. The ability to move around and explore is one that is not generally available in a timetabled class and thus an important aspect of using MOOs for learners.

The activity can be a bit difficult for MOO newcomers. Showing students how to use the online tools which are available on most MOOs is one way to assist them in completing the activity.

Contributor

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ELECTRONIC COURSES

VIRTUAL IMMERSION IN ITALIAN

Context

For the past three years, Maurizio Oliva has based the design of his advanced 300- and 400-level Italian courses on the concept of Virtual Immersion (VI). The project design is most appropriate for advanced courses taught in any language used on the Internet.

Description

Through the integration of Internet resources into language instruction, students in advanced-level Italian courses at the University of Utah have been virtually immersed into Italian language and culture in a manner similar to full immersion or study abroad, but with a stronger emphasis on written communication. All students enrolled in Oliva's classes belong to the virtual community of people who communicate daily in the Italian language. Membership and participation in the community requires only network access, computer literacy, and a strong interest in the topic of discussion. The Italian virtual community has given students the invaluable opportunity for authentic communication with native Italian speakers within the classroom setting. Interaction between members of the community occurs over several network channels, including the USENET newsgroups*Soc.culture.italian*, #Italia on IRC, the Gopher server Italia at the University of Utah: *gopher://italia.hum.utah.edu*, and the mailing lists MARIO, LANGIT and ITALIA-L.

By integrating Internet tools into his language classes, Oliva has exposed his students to resources on Italian language and culture from around the world. Students in some of his courses have put their own work online through Gopher and the World Wide Web to serve as potential resources for others. For example, students in 3rd-Year Conversation and Composition, Italian 312, researched local resources related to Italian music, literature, history, cinema, politics and various other topics. Each student then wrote a final paper listing the resources found in book stores, libraries, and other universities and colleges within the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. The papers were later made available under "Comunita' Locale" on the Gopher server Italia (*gopher://italia.hum.utah.edu*), expanding the possibilities for exposure to Italian language and culture within the Salt Lake City community. Nanda Cremascoli (*nanda.cremascoli@galactica.it*), professor at Liceo Classico Zucchi in Vimercate (Milan), Italy, reviewed the language and formatting of the students' work before it was put online.

During the first two years of Oliva's project, the primary Internet resources used in his classes were electronic mail, USENET newsgroups, Gopher, and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). WordPerfect in Italian was also used to allow students to verify spelling in their written work with the spell-check function, before forwarding it to the instructor or other correspondents. The more traditional tools employed were textbooks, films, lectures, discussions and student presentations. Three additional tools were integrated into certain courses: 1) E-mail correspondence with native tutors from Italy was used in Advanced Grammar and Syntax, Italian 350, Winter 1994; 2) Peer tutoring between advanced and beginning students in

Conversation and Composition, Italian 304, Fall 1993; and 3) E-mail correspondence with students in Italian classes at the University of California at Davis in Italian Society, Italian 403, Spring 1993.

During the current year, Oliva has focused on the integration of multi-media Internet resources into his teaching. Since, Spring 1994, his students have been working with World Wide Web (WWW) resources and in Winter 1995, some of the students enrolled in Italian 402 (Politics and Society) opted to write a WWW page as their final paper. These pages were dedicated to topics related to the past fifty years of Italian history and politics and can be found linked in the WWW server Italia: *http://italia.hum.utah.edu*

Evaluation

Internet-Mediated Instruction (IMI) had a positive impact on student learning throughout the two-year period. The positive results encourage the further development and improvement of the technical settings necessary for IMI. For a detailed description and evaluation of the first two years of Oliva's project, see "Internet Resources and Second Language Acquisition: An Evaluation of Virtual Immersion", Foreign Language Annals, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1995). The past year's use of multi-media resources have produced positive results with respect to student learning, as well as motivation.

The use of WWW resources in the classroom requires a computer lab with multimedia machines and a fast connection to the Internet. Although many language labs are not adequately equipped thus far, the number of labs conducive to WWW use will likely increase in the future. The resources which have been developed at the University of Utah are accessible on the Internet and may be valuable as references for other institutions. For instance, the lists of Italian resources mentioned above and another list of Italian books made into movies could be used as reference material at other colleges and universities.

Italia at the University of Utah is an open system to which anyone may contribute via anonymous FTP. The server has promoted international collaboration with many groups and institutions which have asked for space on Italia for materials such as Marco Bertamini's Frequently Asked Questions for the newsgroup *Society.Culture.Italian*, Maurizio Codogno's collection of Italian songs, Nanda Cremascoli's Italian grammar book in HTML format, and MANUZIO's collection of Italian literature in electronic format. Oliva has worked with Professor Gianni degli Antoni at the University of Milan in the development of a text-based virtual reality environment of Milan's topography. The virtual reality project includes messaging in Italian and has proven to be effective in the teaching of Italian in virtual classrooms. Through collaboration with Professor Mario Ricciardi of the University of Turin, Oliva has also developed a hypertext page dedicated to Italian literature.

Contributor

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"GERMANY LIVE": CONTEMPORARY GERMAN ISSUES ON THE INTERNET AND WORLD WIDE WEB

Context

This is a new German culture course for intermediate and advanced university students. It is currently in its final planning stage and will be offered in fall 1995.

Description

The Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) provide a multitude of resources on German cultural, political, and social topics in the forms of databases, articles, graphics, and discussion groups which can be accessed online. Germany Live is a plan for a university course focused on tapping into these resources in order to research and discuss contemporary German topics.

Since the course is going to utilize new media, its structure will be somewhat different from traditional culture courses. At the beginning of the course, the class will meet three times a week. In these sessions, possible topics and sources for online research will be discussed. Students will also get an introduction to the Internet (e.g.,World Wide Web, Web browsers, newsgroups, and e-mail), hyper-media applications, HyperText Markup Language (HTML), and technical aspects involved in creating hyper media presentations (e.g., use of a scanner, digitizing pictures, and sound). A basic list of WWW home pages that can be used as starting points for further exploration of certain topics will also be provided.

After 2–3 weeks, the students will start researching possible topics in work groups. In the first step, students will select their topics on the basis of WWW resources such as online newspapers, magazines, journals, and discussion groups. Possible topics could be either contemporary topics like political developments in Germany, topics in the arts, or topics about historical developments, to name just a few possibilities.

In the next step, the material gathered through the WWW will be organized and augmented by more traditional sources like articles or film clips. In this phase, the class will only meet once a week to discuss progress of the individual projects (e.g., problems, strategies) and exchange information about technical aspects of their work.

In the end, the research results of each group will be integrated into a hyper-media presentation that is going to be presented to the rest of the class either in the computer lab or via the campus network. These presentations can function as learning tools for students in the other work groups and will be evaluated as such.

Evaluation

The course has ambitious goals. Besides improving their knowledge about contemporary German issues, students will improve their reading, listening and discussion skills, build a computer-related vocabulary, and develop research and presentation strategies such as evaluating the importance of information for their topics and deciding which elements should be represented in form of graphics, sound or video. Students also learn to present research results by means of hyper-media compositions. This nonlinear form of presentation makes it necessary for students to evaluate the relationship between the elements of their topics more carefully and always consider, as authors, the different needs of their audiences, thus improving their own understanding of the topic they are working on.

In a second phase, I plan to put these presentations on the WWW. Tufts students that spend their year abroad at the University of Tuebingen will be invited to look at these presentations and comment on them from their perspective within the German culture. They could also participate in the project as discussion partners and researchers in the field, thus giving the course a real life cross-cultural or intercultural character.

Contributor

Bernhard R. Martin teaches German language and culture at Tufts University. He has developed computer-assisted language instruction modules for beginners and intermediate students in German. His research interests include intercultural communication and literature in the context of nationalism and national identity.

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ELECTRONIC ENGLISH COURSE

Context

This is an elective course for intermediate to advanced students of English as a foreign language at a technical university in Prague.

Description

The project was started as an elective course of English which linked students from different universities worldwide via e-mail and other Internet services. Due to its success, it is going to continue.

The objectives of the course are multiple and include teaching engineering students fundamentals of academic writing; preparing the students for writing joint papers; motivating them to work on the net independently in their free time; and introducing them to basic Internet services, such as e-mail, Gopher, telnet, and ftp and to their use for professional contacts and development. At the same time, this course should foster global awareness and understanding.

The course is planned to last one ten-week academic semester and is divided into five two-week periods. Each two-week period is devoted to writing about one conversational topic and learning one new Internet service (see Appendix). At the beginning of the course, students make international teams together with partner students in other countries located through the Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections discussion list (For information, send a message to: *IECC-REQUEST@stolaf.edu* In the body of the message write: *subscribe)*. In order to get acquainted with their partners abroad, students exchanged messages on personal, general, and academic topics according to a topic list and a time schedule made before the commencement of the project.

According to the program, students' electronic conversations are concentrated on one topic for the duration of two weeks. First, each student writes an entry of about two hundred words (though longer messages are encouraged) on one topic and sends it to his or her partner abroad. Then, each student is responsible for asking the partner a minimum of two questions per entry. Finally, each student is responsible for answering questions from the partner. It is recommended that students make one entry per week and complete the question and answer follow-up during the following week to maintain the schedule of the project.

In addition to e-mail correspondence, students are expected to familiarize themselves with common Internet services during the project. They are assigned tasks to be accomplished using Internet resources such as Gopher and telnet. Working on their tasks, students learn how to use listservers and other Internet tools. For international meetings with their partners abroad, they are taught to enter MOO's. The World Wide Web can be used throughout the course where available.

Tasks related to students' fields of study are integrated with those leading them to acquire knowledge of foreign cultures. For example, they get acquainted with services offered by listservers. Based on their academic interests, they select mailing lists to join and practice this particular net service while learning new information related to their engineering study.

They learn about the country and school of their partners through Gopher services. They study resources such as libraries belonging to their partners' schools and compare them with resources available locally. They research ftp sites maintained by their partners' schools or by other institutions in the vicinity. If available, they follow USENET newsgroups related to their professional interests.

Evaluation

The Electronic English Course is popular among students who are ready to invest their time into learning English and the Internet. They consider the course activities useful and motivating. They do a lot of work in this project, more than in any other English course they have taken.

Their English skills improve noticeably. Whether or not they decide to attend the same course again, they remain on the net and continue to work on improving their English through the net resources.

Contributor

Dr. Stanislava Kasikova has taught English at the Czech Technical University since 1981. For the last two years she has been teaching English courses using e-mail and the Internet.

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Appendix: 2-Week Unit Topics in the Electronic English Course

TOPIC ONE

Introduce yourself. Describe where you live, your age, gender, and important characteristics of your personality. Write about your interests. Finish with some special information — something that will make people remember you.

TOPIC TWO

Describe the place where you live. Is it the same place where you go to school? Include geographical location, weather conditions, history, and some interesting points.

TOPIC THREE

Describe your school. Include interesting historical or other characteristics. Write about strengths and weaknesses of your academic institution.

TOPIC FOUR

Describe the career choices you may make. Discuss jobs available for those who study in your discipline.

TOPIC FIVE

Free topic to be chosen by students

FUN101: AN ONLINE EFL/ESL WRITING COURSE

Context

This course was designed for students who have taken at least one university-level English composition class. The first course offered through Frizzy University Network was FUN101 in summer 1995. It included students from Japan, Croatia, Italy, China, the Netherlands, Korea, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, and Brazil.

Description

Many students studying EFL/ESL in non-English-speaking countries have little or no exposure to the language outside of the classroom. Frizzy University Network (FUN) was created as a place where EFL/ESL students in foreign countries can continue their study of the English language. Through FUN classes, FUN tutoring, FUN grammar, and FUN references, students can develop their communicative ability in written English.

The educational goals for the students in FUN101 were threefold: (1) to write an essay in English with a clear point, purpose, and audience in mind; (2) to gain an understanding of other cultures; and (3) to be exposed to educational resources for ESL students on the Internet.

Students for FUN101 were recruited by posting messages on several international electronic gathering points for ESL teachers and students, such as TESL-L and schMOOze university.

FUN101 was divided into four sections, each requiring three readings and one essay related to a topic within the general theme of "Intercultural Understanding." The course started with the broad topic of stereotypes, then moved into comparisons of work and leisure time in different cultures. The third section focused on relationships between family members, friends and co-workers, and the last part of the class was devoted to exploring the role of the individual within cultures.

This move from the general to the specific was paralleled not only in the topics covered, but the writing process and introduction to Internet resources as well. First, we looked at controlling ideas, through the topic of stereotypes. The students received their readings and assignments through e-mail using a system similar to a listserv. They also used e-mail to conduct class discussions and were encouraged to "talk" online with each other outside of class.

For the second section, by discussing work and leisure ethics in different cultures, the students developed writing with a clear purpose in mind. They received their assignments, posted and responded to discussion topics, and gave peer feedback on essays through a private Bulletin Board Service (BBS) Conference open only to FUN101 participants. They were also required to participate in at least one of the EFL/ESL Student Discussion Lists located at Latrobe University (See "International E-mail Discussion Lists" earlier in this volume.)

During the third section of the course, the students discussed intra- and intercultural relationships and looked at how to write with a particular audience in mind. At this time, the students went to the FUN web page to retrieve assignments and readings, as well as link to other resources of information for EFL/ESL learners. They were also introduced to schMOOze University, where class discussions were held in real time. The students also met with the instructor in her office at schMOOze for individual and group conferences.

By the end of the course, the topic had narrowed to the role of the individual within different cultures. During this section, the students brought together the ideas of writing with a clear point, purpose and audience in mind, as well as added details to make their writing richer. They were then asked to utilize any or all of the Internet functions they enjoyed in order to conduct research for their final essay.

FUN101 culminated in a reflective essay evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of taking an online writing course.

Evaluation

According to the students, through FUN101 they developed their ability and confidence in writing in English, as well as an understanding and appreciation of cultures other than their own. Most students said they would like to take more online courses in the future. As a result of the students' feedback, I have created FUN courses specific to their interests (e.g., business writing and creative writing). In fact, their only criticisms were of the technical difficulties regarding submission of their completed assignments. However, the students were all very patient because they were so motivated to participate and learn.

What worked best in the course was the element of variety within a general structure. The students knew they would have three readings and one essay for each section, but what they did in response to the readings (and the functions of the Internet they used to do this) differed from one assignment to the next.

Contributor

Karla Frizler (M.A., San Francisco State University, 1995) has taught at both the university level and in adult education, and currently works as an Educational Technology Consultant. She founded FUN as part of her Master's Thesis project, and continues to run it as a non-profit organization, offering a variety of online ESL writing courses.

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THE COMPUTER CLUB:
SOCIAL AND COMPUTER NETWORKS CONVERGE

Context

The Computer Club was implemented in an intensive English program at the university level for international students preparing to attend regular curriculum courses. However, something similar could be done with any age group of ESL students at early-intermediate or above levels. With some adjustments, the same type of club could also be done for other foreign languages.

Description

Have you ever wanted to introduce Internet activities to your students, but had a hard time figuring out how to work it into the schedule? One solution might be to offer a computer club as an optional activity.

Some of the steps you will want to take before starting is to get student accounts on the university computer system, make a list of possible activities and contacts, announce the club to the students, and prepare yourself to enjoy learning along with the club members.

On the first day of class the instructors announced the social activities offered by the Tennessee Intensive English Program (TIEP) including camping, coffee hours, sports, and shopping trips. The club was presented as an out-of-class, fun get-together for both experienced and first-time computer users. Students were invited to talk with me to hear more and sign up. As they came to my office I explained that the main purpose of the group was to practice using English, but also to learn how to use the new computers (PowerPCs) in the recently created university lab in our building. The students themselves chose all activities to pursue in the club which met once per week for one hour in the afternoon after other classes. In addition to the club meeting hour, students had access to the lab most of the day, seven days per week.

In the computer lab I gave each member a unix e-mail address courtesy of the UT Computer Center and at least one address of an off-campus penpal. I knew this type of address on our campus allows the students full Internet access, including e-mail, the World Wide Web (WWW), and real time connections Some types of addresses or accounts would not allow the use of such a variety of activities.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

In our lab students supply a floppy and on it are saved segments of the shareware version of Eudora which contain the user's unix address. Once this information is on the disk the user can put in the disk and automatically download all e-mail messages currently in his e-mail box that will fit on the floppy. Then, the messages can be read, edited, entered off-line, and prepared for future sending.

I got a list of penpals for the club which had been posted to the electronic discussion list TESLCA-L (see Appendix). I also sent out the addresses of the club members to TESLCA-L. The TESLCA-L computer branch of TESL-L produced a number of much appreciated responses and messages sent directly to the club members. Several members of TESLCA-L replied to my request for correspondence in this way. The club members familiarized themselves with the computers as I helped groups to set up the Eudora e-mail program. Once all their information was entered, each member had only to put the floppy disc in to easily and automatically check mail.

WORLD WIDE WEB

One of the members was interested in the possibility of transferring to a university in Texas where she had relatives. I explained that, although I had lived in Texas, I would not be able to answer specific questions about the university's programs of study. Then, we used the program Netscape to browse the Web beginning with UT Martin's home page where we branched to information about other universities. Thus, we found general information about the university in question. This experience was nearly as new to me as it was for the student; however, it gave us the opportunity to use English to work together toward a meaningful solution to a problem generated by the student. Of course, I told her that further research in the library was important to answer her more detailed questions with an eventual letter of inquiry to the university. Thus, searching the computer network was merely one of the tools in the problem-solving process and not an end in itself.

REAL-TIME CONNECTIONS

One of the members and I used the unix command, ytalk, to make a direct connection between computer terminals in order to have a conversation typed in real time. Using ytalk anything entered on of the terminals also appears on the other. While it was interesting to watch language production and monitoring in progress, visiting schMOOze University appeared more exciting for the students who tried it. That virtual university can be accessed via telnet (see Appendix). The students are then asked to sign on as guests or as registered users. The members who visited schMOOze on the Internet signed on as guests, looked at the map, and then went to the classroom where they tried the *say*, *emote*, and *learn* commands.

Evaluation

At the outset students were told that their responsibility in the club was to decide which activity they wanted to learn. This helped to reaffirm the concept of self-directed study for those from cultures which emphasize the central authority role of the teacher.

Although the members of the club were introduced to penpals via electronic mail, browsing the WWW to search for information, schMOOze University, a tutorial program, and a word processor, the bulk of the members chose to pursue electronic mail with penpals whose messages had appeared in their boxes following my appeal on TESLCA-L. The spontaneous and helpful responses on the part of both teachers and students in other locations were uplifting and sustained the interest of some members beyond the life of the club.

There has been great enthusiasm for the club, and because of the overwhelming interest, I have placed a limit on the number of members. I often found the students in the lab at times other than our meetings and apparently more willing than before to work with native speakers in the lab. Students have come back to thank me for introducing them to the resources on campus which have linked them to others in an on-going learning process.

Contributor

Ken Fackler, MA TEFL, currently explores the Internet and its uses as an ESL Instructor at the Tennessee Intensive English Progam at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

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Appendix: Some Internet Resources

Subscribe to TESCA-L by first subscribing to TESL-L and then TESLCA-L

To subscribe to TESL-L, send an e-mail message to:
LISTSERV@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU
In the body of the message write:
subscribe TESL-L Yourfirstname Yourlastname

To subscribe to TESLCA-L, send an e-mail message to:
LISTSERV@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU
In the body of the message write:
subscribe TESLCA-L Yourfirstname Yourlastname

Many other listserv groups exist for other types of students and age groups such as IECC for K–12. To get information about subscribing to IECC send an e-mail message to:
IECC-REQUEST@STOLAF.EDU
In the body of the message write:
subscribe

Connect to SchMOOze University by typing:
telnet arthur.rutgers.edu 8888

NO STUDENT ACCESS?
INTERNET LEARNING ACTIVITIES VIA THE TEACHER'S HOME COMPUTER

Context

The following activities were carried out for adult evening college German classes, levels one and two. Similar activities could be done with German students of any level, or, if adapted, with students of other languages.

Description

Our college does not yet have its own Internet access. Nevertheless, the following activities have worked well to get adult students involved in using the Internet via the teacher's home computer.

All students in the teacher's first year and second year German courses were required to write text to be sent out over e-mail on German language listservers. Twenty-five to 50 lines of text were required of German 102 students and 50 to 100 lines of text were required from German 201 and 202 students. The students wrote their e-mail messages on the college's WordPerfect software, and saved these files to .TXT files. The instructor then reviewed the messages before sending them over his Prodigy-Internet Access at home to various listservers (see Appendix A: German Language Listservers).

To help the students' improve their grammar, students were given copies of each others' messages, which were discussed by the instructor and the class. Each student then prepared a list of 15–20 sentences she or he had written that contained grammar errors and the student's corrections.

The instructor received replies to the students' Internet messages on his home Prodigy access line, printed out the replies and brought them to class for discussion. Students discussed the content, cultural information, and unfamiliar langauge in the e-mail messages they received. Students also prepared further responses as desired.

In addition, the instructor downloaded postings from various listservers on interesting topics related to German language and culture. There are numerous examples, including the Oktoberfest and Karnival. Students searched these messages for interesting topics in culture and business and presented a summary of the content area to the class.

In addition to the e-mail exchanges, the instructor regularly downloaded and distributed interesting files regarding German language and culture. These files come from the listservers, from German language Gophers, and from the World Wide Web (see Appendix B). They cover a wide range of topics from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, including jokes, films, music, travel information, news, cultural events, social issues, and language issues such as German dialects and changes in German grammar. The students evaluated the messages for interesting topics and presented a summary of the content to the class. For first year students, the instructor assisted by introducing key vocabulary.

Evaluation

Students were enthusiastic in using e-mail for both reading messages and writing replies. Students took a greater interest in preparing their messages for public scrutiny. They often used structures presented in the received authentic materials and incorporated them directly into their e-mail messages.

The cultural materials were of great interest to the students, and they were often pleasantly surprised at their own competence in comprehending downloaded authentic materials. Their reading and writing skills improved with the use of authentic materials geared to their levels, and their speaking skills also improved as they discussed their own chosen topics of interest.

I hope that by next year our college will be able to provide Internet access to the students and they will be able to use the Internet themselves directly. But my experiences this year have shown that the Internet can be well exploited for student gain even when only the teacher has access.

Contributor

Jim Rorke, Ed. D., was a Fulbright Teacher at the bilingual J. F. Kennedy School in Berlin, Germany. He is currently a US Army Language Coordinator on Fort Bragg and teaches German in the evenings at nearby Methodist College.

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Appendix A: German Language Listservers

American Association of Teachers of German:
AATG@INDYCM5.IUPUI.EDU
(This listserver is available to both instructor and student.)

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Special Interest Group:
ACTFLSIG/@UTARLVM1.UTA.EDU
(This listserver is for German language researchers and test administrators.)

German Net:
IDV-NETZ@MACH1.WLU.CA
(This listserver presents current information for both instructor and student.)

Appendix B: WWW German Connection

American Association for the Teaching of German (AATG):
http:/www.stolaf.edu/stolauf/depts/aatg/

German culture pages at the University of North Carolina:
http://www.uncg.edu/~lixlpurc/german.html

German culture at Berlin:
http://www.cheme.fu-berlin.de/outerspace/www-german.html

German culture pages at the University of Alberta:
http:/gpu.srv.ualberta.ca/~mprokop/homepage.html

Goethe Institute, Chicago:
http://www/goethe.de/a/chi/

PART III:
USING ONLINE RESOURCES

A wealth of authentic language materials are available via the Internet. This section shows you where it is and how to make use of it, and how to put your own students' work on the Net.

Online News shows some ways of getting, and using, today's foreign language news today. *Data-Bases and Bibliographic Research* shows how university students can use Gopher, telnet and other tools to access foreign language data. *Traveling the World (Wide Web)* provides a number of well-designed activities and home pages for students' Virtual Web connections to faraway places and information. *Net Navigation* illustrates ways of teaching your students how to find things on the Net. *Multimedia via the Net* illustrates two examples of getting and using online multimedia resources. *Teacher-Designed Web Pages* illustrates how teachers have designed pages for the benefit of their students. And finally, *Student Publishing on the Web* provides excellent examples of what's to be gained from publishing your students' own work on the Web, and how to go about doing it.

LE SMIC JEUNE: GATHERING INFORMATION AND LANGUAGE FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEWSGROUPS

Context

This activity was used in an advanced Business French course. It would be equally effective in intermediate and advanced courses in conversation, contemporary issues, or contemporary civilization.

Description

The goal of the Business French course is to teach content (e.g., business concepts and the language used to express them) and advanced language skills (e.g., persuasion, negotiation activities). Understanding the interaction of government policy and business decisions is an important business concept which negotiations involving current events can make particularly evident.

Supporting one's arguments with information gathered from French USENET newsgroups is a natural extension of the computing already done in this course. Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) students are already familiar with the USENET news format because many courses have their own newsgroups. Created at the request of faculty members, these groups are identical to USENET groups but are not distributed off campus. This business French course had two newsgroups: the Summaries Board was used to repost the review of the French press that arrives daily through the Internet as well as the summaries of French business news that students were required to write each week; the Roundtable Board was used for occasional written assignments and general discussion.

In the spring of 1994 the French government proposed a reduced minimum wage for youth, the *SMIC Jeune*. (SMIC is the acronym for *salaire minimum interprofessionnel de croissance*, the French equivalent of the American minimum wage.) Students became aware of this issue through the reposted French press review and through the French television news picked up from SCOLA (satellite broadcasts of foreign news) and distributed on the campus cable network. Students gathered this information, summarized it in postings to the roundtable newsgroup, and used time in class to clarify the information and define issues that they needed to understand before attempting to negotiate a solution. Through texts and through video materials created for European television, they studied the basic interactions of wages and employment, the hidden costs of employing workers, the French educational system in relationship to job training, and strategies for creating jobs. These activities provided content-specific language as well as concepts needed for the negotiation activity that would end the unit. The students were divided into two teams — youth and government — with our one native speaker as the mediator and told to negotiate an end to the conflict between their groups. (At the time the students were demonstrating in Paris.)

Students had been working throughout the semester on negotiation language but, because of the difficulty of reconciling complex language and concepts, still needed some models of argumentation and persuasion in French. They found these in a French newsgroup available through USENET (*fr.soc.divers*) which posted the official announcement of the wage proposal, a call for student demonstrations, and numerous articles from individuals that argued for or against the proposal. The negotiation lasted about 45 minutes; the remaining 30 minutes of that class period were devoted to assessing how the negotiation was conducted. Like the French, we were unable to reach a satisfactory solution, but the attempt illuminated a number of business-related issues for all of us and provided an extended opportunity to use high-level language in a professional context.

Evaluation

The use of the French newsgroup proved to be successful as a preparation for the classroom negotiation; students were able to integrate both the content and the language used by the native speakers into their own oral arguments. Although much of the same information can be gleaned from French news reports on television and in the press — and students did use these resources as well — using newsgroups has several advantages. First of all, newsgroups are accessible when the students need the information; they can view televised news only at scheduled broadcast times and French newspapers arrive on campus at least several days after they are printed. Second, newsgroups are interactive and, therefore, model the argument-response language that students must use in debate and negotiation. The variety of contributions to newsgroups also helps students become sensitive to a number of argumentation styles. Finally, in the case of the *SMIC Jeune*, because information from the *Journal officiel* was posted, the students had constant access to the exact provisions of the proposal under discussion.

The disadvantage of this activity is obvious: discussions on newsgroups are ephemeral and unpredictable, making it extremely difficult to create a syllabus in which the use of foreign language newsgroups is an integral part. In the case of the *SMIC Jeune*, the coincidence of content and current events was fortuitous; this exact activity can only be duplicated in another semester if the professor archives the newsgroup discussion. This practice, of course, takes away the advantages of immediacy and interactivity; the news media will not reinforce aspects of the discussion and students will not be able to watch the debate grow over several days. On the other hand, predictable events, such as elections, are certain to inspire discussions that can be effectively used in conversation and contemporary civilization courses. Finally, it might also be useful to have students post messages in order to solicit contributions.

Contributor

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Appendix: Accessing French News

FROGNET

There are at least two services that distribute summaries of French news through the Internet. The summaries that were reposted for this course are available from the list FROGNET. To receive the accented version send an e-mail to:

listproc@list.cren.ne

In the message field type:

subscribe frognet Yourfirstname Yourlastname

To receive the accented version send an e-mail to:

listproc@list.cren.ne

In the message field type:

subscribe frognet — Yourfirstname Yourlastname

(where *Yourfirstname* is replaced by your own first name and *Yourlastname* is replaced by your own last name. Be sure to include the dash between *frognet* and *Yourfirstname)*

The FROGNET summaries are also available on Gophers:
The AATF:
gopher://utsainfo.utsa.edu:7070/1
The French Embassy in Washington, D.C.:
gopher://avril.amba-ottawa.fr:70/1
gopher://iep.univ-lyon2.fr:70/11/amb-wash.fr

OTHER NEWS SOURCES

The Agence France Presse has just begun a commercial service which distributes two press reviews each day to subscribers. For more information write to:

afp@digex.net

French USENET newsgroup also covers topics of current interest in France:

fr.soc.divers

NACHRICHTEN:
ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETINS AND THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

Context

Intermediate or Advanced German Conversation and Composition Class (fifth or sixth university semester)

Description

In the context of an intermediate conversation and composition class, it is assumed that the students have mastered most grammatical concepts. Two of the more difficult concepts, subjunctive I (indirect discourse) and passive voice, are reviewed again in depth. A major obstacle that foreign language teachers face when presenting more difficult grammatical concepts is the need for target language authenticity. By the time the students have reached the intermediate level they have mastered the general form exercises presented in their textbooks.

In order to add real life examples to my lesson plan, I turned to the electronic news distribution group, GERMNEWS, which publishes daily news bulletins from various German news agencies. These news bulletins often contain many examples of subjunctive I and passive voice. I would e-mail a copy of a day's news to the students in my class. The students also received a set of questions for each news bulletin that centered on an examination of the language structures employed. Some of the activities included finding all of the uses of subjunctive I (or passive voice) in the excerpt and explaining the function of this grammar structure in the sentence or paragraph.

A SAMPLE EXCERPT

> Der Weltklimagipfel hat ein Mandat verabschiedet, das weitere Verhandlungen ueber einen verbesserten Klimaschutz vorsieht. Die Hauptverantwortung beim Klimaschutz tragen danach die Industriestaaten. In dem Papier heisst es, dass ihre bisherigen Verpflichtungen nicht ausreichend seien. Die Entwicklungslaender braeuchten deshalb zunaechst keine neuen Verpflichtungen einzugehen. Der Arbeitsauftrag, der auf Vorschlag der USA Berliner Mandat genannt wird, sieht vor, dass eine Arbeitsgruppe bis 1997 konkrete Vorschlaege machen soll, in welchem Umfang die Treibhausgase nach dem Jahr 2000 verringert werden sollen.

This excerpt includes the use of subjunctive I and subjunctive II, allowing for a comparison between the two. Also included is use of the passive voice.

Evaluation

The inclusion of authentic materials stimulated student interest. Pre-class discussions often included comparisons of the number of examples found and the grammatical context of each example. An unexpected bonus also grew out of my use of GERMNEWS: students became more aware of current events in Germany. Many of the news articles were also related to topics under discussion in class, offering students the opportunity to draw on current material to augment their own class participation.

Drawbacks to this activity lie in the production of GERMNEWS itself: the news bulletins are sent without traditional spelling (umlaut and ess-tsett) which is confusing to the students at first, and there are often orthographic mistakes in some of the entries. Before forwarding any news bulletin to my students, I had to peruse it carefully, to ensure that it was free of mistakes.

Contributor

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To subscribe to GERMNEWS, send an e-mail message to:
LISTSERV@VM.GMD.DE
In the message field write:
subscribe GERMNEWS *Yourfirstname Yourlastname*

WORLD NEWS ABROAD

Context

What's going on around the world? The Internet is a great tool for accessing present day news from around the world. Here's your chance to turn your classroom into a newsroom. Do you have students that remind you of Murphy Brown? How about Lou Grant? Make them a star on your own news show featuring world news in the target language. If more than one language is offered at your school, work cooperatively and make it a departmental project. This activity would be best suited for the upper level language learner as it involves fairly strong reading and interpretative skills as well as fairly fluid speech.

Description

By using the information in the news on the Internet you can create a televised newsroom in your classroom as an ongoing project. This will give your students a chance to become more familiar with the present day life abroad, build their public speaking skills in the target language, help them become more familiar with current events, and improve their reading skills and vocabulary.

Using the list following this activity of some of the newspapers available on the Internet, or perhaps a different location that you already know, have your students view the present day news. Some languages have more than one newspaper online. If you do this as an ongoing project you may switch regions by choosing a different paper every month or two. If you are only spending a short time on this you may have some students reporting information from one paper while others are using a different one. This could work as a good basis of comparison for how events are viewed cross–culturally.

Have your students pick articles, working in pairs or threesomes. Assign groups to cover different aspects of the news, such as headlines, sports, local culture, and weather. If they do not all have Internet access you could print the paper and have them choose from there, or choose for them. The beauty of this is your stronger students can take on more difficult articles whereas your weaker students may be better suited to follow the weather or a cultural story.

Have your students read and develop verbal news reports on the stories they are responsible for. Create a newsroom in your classroom where the reporters take turns presenting the top stories of the week (biweekly/monthly) in the target language. Segment the show as in the real news. Videotape the presentations or if you are in a city where you have an educational channel that will televise for you, go for it. If you can, go on "imaginary" location — stand outside to give the weather report or in front of a construction site if your students will be talking about something under construction or recently destroyed.

If you choose to use news from a variety of countries consider compiling the stories and creating a home page on the net. Include the top stories that your students choose and create hypertext links to servers in the countries where the events occurred. You may also want to include a hypertext link to the original article on the net.

In addition to working on their reading and speaking skills, have students develop new vocabulary lists from the articles they are responsible for. You may want to discuss some grammar that the students often run across in their articles, as well. By following the stories over a few days they will get a more in-depth understanding of the viewpoint of the region the articles are written in. And, since we all know the news is biased, you might want to discuss the difference between your country's bias and that of the target culture. The best part is you are using current events, not information that is weeks old from a paper you subscribe to, and of course it will not cost you a subscription fee if your school is networked.

Try to make the newsroom as real as possible. Ask your students to watch the news in the evenings to get a feel for how news is actually given. Have them watch SCOLA (foreign news broadcasts via satellite) if you have access to it so that they can see what the newsroom of the target culture is like.

Evaluation

Your method of evaluation will depend on the guidelines you set with your students. Keep in mind that these activities call for collaborative efforts. Students should be rewarded for their responsibility to the group as well as their final verbal presentations. You may find it more important to judge how well they have communicated and how fluidly they spoke rather than attend to each little grammatical error they may make. The reports don't have to be memorized, since in the real world the news isn't memorized either. If you do this as an ongoing project students can change roles so they all learn to speak in the target language as well as to prepare and post documents on the net.

Contributor

Lauren Rosen assists university instructors in the uses of technology in their curriculum. Previously she was a secondary Spanish instructor for four years. She completed her Master of Education at the University of Minnesota in Teaching of Second Languages and Cultures with an emphasis in technology.

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Appendix: Internet News Sites

Multiple listings for a variety of languages was compiled by Planetary News, Inc. and can be accessed at:

http://marketplace.com/epapers.list.www/e-papers.links.html

Many of these papers are part of the less commonly taught languages category. If you can't find what you are looking for here try the following list for some languages:

FRENCH

La revue de presse québécoise:
http://www.cuslm.ca/cboucher/rpq–jour.html

Luminyrama:
http://www-resus.univ-mrs.fr/Fr/Luminyrama/luminyrama.html
Luminyrama is a student newspaper in French, Resus BBS of Universite Luminy–Marseille.

Frogmag:
http://www.limsi.fr/~krus/frogmag/
A French electronic magazine.

The Virtual Baguette:
http://www.mmania.com:80/vb/html/french/index.html
The Virtual Baguette is an online magazine full of French cultural information.

GERMAN

Deutsche Welle Radio and TV International:
http://www-dw.gmd.de/cgi-bin/listfolder/deutsch/news.html
The home page for the Deutsche Welle Radio and TV International is:
http://www–dw.gmd.de

Der Spiegel:
http://www.hamburd.germany.pop.de:80/bda/int/spiegel
Der Spiegel is a popular online news magazine in German.

German Daily:
gopher://ukoln.bath.ac.uk:7070/11/BUBL_Main_Menu/B/BD02/BD02A
German Daily news digest source. Articles are listed by date.

JAPANESE

http://www.c.hiroshima-dit.ac.jp/com/j-index.html
An online magazine from China written in Japanese.

SPANISH

Spanish News:
ftp://langlab.uta.edu/pub/TECLA
Recent Spanish news. Text based.

El Comercio de Gijón:
http://estruc.etsiig.uniovi.es/noticias/index.html
A newspaper of information in Spain. It's published in Gijón.

RUSSIAN

Cyrrilic Font Newspapers
If you have a cyrrilic font installed on your computer try the following for a list of newspapers:
http://www.ripn.net/infomag/newpapers/

Russian News in English by Topic:
gopher://nic2.hawaii.net/11/russia
News documents sorted by topic.

Russia's Northwest:
http://www.spb.su/sev-zap/index.html
Severo–Zapad carries the latest news from Russia's northwest.

Russian News in English by Date:
gopher://kiev.sovam.com:70/11/UPRESA
News stories listed by date.

HEBREW

Daily News:
gopher://israel-info.gov.il/11/new
Daily news from Israel in English. Information is posted from the Israel Foreign Ministry–Jerusalem.

Hebrew Press:
http://www.israel.org/israel-info/Titles.cgi/archive@dps
These are selected articles from the Hebrew Press. Articles are in English and listed by title and date.

ITALIAN

Weekly News:
http://www.citinv.it/7giorni/index.html
Angenzia ANSA. Weekly news in Italian organized by topic and date.

News by Topic:
http://www.mi.cnr.it:80/WOI/ansa/welcome.html
News is listed by topic. Articles are in English.

RUSSIAN ARTICLES SENT BY E-MAIL

Context

This activity is suitable for those who have studied Russian for two or more years.

Description

I have been making articles from current Russian newspapers available for free to the public via e-mail. These articles should be of interest to various readers interested in current Russian textual prose and events in Russia and some of the adjoining republics. Also included are cultural articles often taken from older newspapers dealing with topics such as incidents in the lives of famous writers, musicians, and painters.

First, all articles are typed in Cyrillic into a computer. Then, the articles are converted into four formats, so that readers with various software can read the Russian in at least one of the four formats. These are sent out through electronic mailing lists to subscribers in some 20 countries, including a good number of schools and universities.

Four electronic mailing lists have been established for the four formats:

RUSSLIST-RED for articles in READABLE format (e.g., MIR i DRUZhBA)
RUSSLIST-KOI7 for articles in KOI–7 format (e.g., mir I druvba)
RUSSLIST-UAV for messages written using AV font and then uuencoded
RUSSLIST-UKOI8 for messages written using KOI–8 font and then uuencoded

To subscribe to any or all of these lists, please notify me by sending your full name, your e-mail address, and which format(s) you desire to:
RPAINE@CC.COLORADO.EDU

If you would like further information on these four formats and how you can make use of them on different computer systems, I can provide that as well.

Evaluation

A number of subscribers have used the articles in the classrooms and have said that the articles are most interesting to the students. They like the idea of authentic language being used and learning current facts about Russia and the republics.

Contributor

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CHRONICLE ON THE WEB:
ONLINE NEWS AS A RESOURCE FOR TEACHING ESL

Context

Print newspapers have been a valuable source for teaching ESL for some time. However, with advent of online access to newspapers, a world of possibilities becomes accessible for helping students to develop greater proficiency in English. In addition, online resources give ready access to daily domestic newspaper articles, editorials, letters from readers, and international news.

Description

A valuable resource is the online version of the San Francisco Chronicle at URL:
http://sfgate.com

Depending upon the capabilities of your World Wide Web browser, you should be able to select from a variety of reading selections. While Netscape is the most popular graphical web browser, a text-only browser called Lynx also will allow you to find and bring back information from this online newspaper. When you reach the San Francisco Gate Homepage, you can select Today's Chronicle. Next, you will have the opportunity of selecting from the following menu:

News
Sports
Business
Editorial
Food
Datebook

If you select News, you will see hypertext links to all the news stories appearing on this day. If you see a newspaper article that you wish to bring back for your students, those using Lynx should press the letter p This should bring up another menu. If you want to mail the article back to yourself as e-mail, arrow down to selection 2. Once you have selected 2, you will be asked to provide your e-mail address. Type in your e-mail address. The article will be sent to you immediately as an e-mail message. Before mailing the article to yourself, be sure that you are reading the text of the article that you want. If you are using a graphical web browser such as Netscape or Mosaic, you will want to use the feature that permits sending back a text-only version of a document to your e-mail address.

Many types of learner projects are possible using this online resource. For example, the instructor could select one news article for all students. The article may be distributed to all students via e-mail or printed out as hardcopies for in-class use. For beginning classes with students with limited English proficiency, one article could be divided among several students and later reassembled as a class activity.

For more advanced classes the instructor could send or distribute a list of just article titles. Students may then themselves select a particular article to analyze. Students could even be asked to create their own short article based solely on the title of a particular article.

For students with their own World Wide Web access, students may be encouraged to read several articles. Later, students may provide either oral or written synopses of the articles. They may also connect to a link called the Gate Conferences that permits asynchronous discussion with other readers about current news topics. While the Gate Conference is currently a free service, it may in the future involve a monthly charge.

Evaluation

Using an online newspaper gives the ESL instructor the opportunity to select materials appropriate for individual learner's proficiency. For example, a letter to the editor about a hot topic may be less demanding than reading the entire news article about the topic. For the intermediate ESL student, perhaps the news article itself would be the most appropriate selection. For advanced ESL learners, a look at the Editorial Page may provide students the opportunity of reflecting on more abstract concepts in English. An online newspaper lets the ESL instructor tailor one daily newspaper to many different student proficiency levels without ever picking up a pair of scissors.

Contributor

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DATA-BASES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

BRINGING CULTURE ALIVE: USING LEXIS-NEXIS TO INTEGRATE CULTURAL ISSUES INTO AN INTRODUCTORY READING COURSE

Context

This project is suitable for students in the fifth semester university foreign language study. Lexis-Nexis contains German, French, Italian, and Dutch language newspapers.

Description

The establishment of a minor in German Studies and the introduction of a business German curriculum at Washington State University call for a broader scope in the teaching of reading skills. The inclusion of a research project in our introductory reading course using the Lexis-Nexis database (an online information retrieval system) has made this possible. By incorporating use of this full-text database, language students are given the opportunity not only to build reading skills, but also to be introduced to the technology and information skills they will likely need in their future careers. Incorporating the database into this assignment allowed students to read articles soon after they were published, thus providing students indexed, timely access to information on their topic from a reliable source. The mechanics of this assignment were worked out in a collaborate effort between a member of the teaching faculty and a university librarian German subject specialist.

The Lexis-Nexis project calls for the students to report on a current cultural issue. In our case, students worked with topics central to the 1994 German national elections. Topics included the environment, the national economy, unemployment, immigration, specific presidential candidates, and political parties. Students searched a full-text German newspaper, *Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, in the Lexis-Nexis database for articles on their chosen topic. They were to find seven pertinent articles which were published at two-week intervals, read the articles, and present them in a five-page paper in German, illustrating the development of their chosen issue over a period of time. This Lexis-Nexis project constituted 10% of their final course grade.

Librarian involvement is crucial at all stages of this project. At the beginning of the semester, the class met with the librarian for an introduction to Lexis-Nexis and assistance with search strategies. Prior to the initial meeting with the librarian, students received the following assignment sheet (in German):

1. Choose an aspect of the German national elections which interests you (e.g., one of the political parties [CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, Greens/Coalition 90, and the PDS], the economy, the environment, immigration policies, right extremism, a candidate).
2. Go to the library and find two or three articles on your topic. (Note: Our library has subscriptions to *Die Welt*, *Die Zeit*, *Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Frankfurter*, and *Allgemeine Zeitung*.)
3. Photocopy the articles on your topic and bring them to our meeting with the librarian.

The librarian's instruction session begins by examining a newspaper article from a German newspaper. As a transparency, the article is displayed on the screen in front of the classroom. With student participation, the librarian examines the structure, wording and text of the article, which give clues on how one would retrieve similar articles in Lexis-Nexis. The librarian highlights keywords in the headline of the sample article, other significant vocabulary in the text of the article which focus on the topic of the article, and the physical arrangement of words (e.g., proximity, inflected forms, abbreviations.) The librarian gives additional advice which is specific to the target language.

Students must carefully construct their search so that inflected forms of their search terms will be retrieved. A truncation symbol after the root allows them to pick up all forms of the word or search term. Because Lexis-Nexis searches for an exact match in the newspaper's text, one must truncate search terms like *Rede* to include inflected forms such as *Reden*. Searches which include masculine nouns would also require appropriate truncation. The search terms should be entered with the Lexis-Nexis truncation symbol, ! , after the word's root. Searches for articles about presidential speeches would then be formed: *Bundespraesident! and Rede!*

Students must consider that verbs and nouns are often located further apart in German sentences than in English. Using a proximity operator allows the student to limit searches to articles in which two words appear within a specific number of words. For example, to find articles in which any form of the name *Herzog* appears within fifteen words of any form of *seine Rede* (his speech), one would enter as a search statement: *Herzog w/15 sein! Rede!*

Because German uses abbreviations and acronyms to a greater extent than American English, students must be aware of alternative ways of writing their search terms. This is particularly true for political parties. Students should also be aware of slang terms which are often quickly adapted and used in the German press. Students searching for articles on the SPD party would be advised to use *Sozialdemokraten*, *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*, and SPD as search terms connected by the Boolean OR connector.

Words with umlauts are transliterated: an umlauted "ä" is written as "ae", an umlauted "ü" is written as "ue", etc. Therefore students searching words with umlauts must remember to add the "e" after the corresponding vowel.

After some basic instruction on Boolean operators, truncation methods, limiting by date, and word proximity searches, the students deconstruct the text of the articles they brought to the classroom. As part of this exercise, the students write out sample search statements which correspond to the article's headline and text. Students then explain the text of their article and present their search statements on the chalkboard, discussing their strategies with their classmates. For example, a student looking for articles written about Roman Herzog's acceptance speech upon being elected as Germany's President may write a search statement which looks like this:

> *headline(herzog or bundespraesident!) and antrittsrede! and date bef 1–1–95*

After students express a satisfactory level of comfort with writing these type of search statements, the librarian gives instructions on printing out the articles retrieved by their search statements. Students are then ready to start on their assignment.

Throughout the semester, the librarian functions as a resource person for students using Lexis-Nexis. They assist with hands-on use of the database and consultation for any difficulties students may experience in their attempts to locate appropriate texts on their topic require the librarian to be available to students requesting help.

The language teacher offers the class guidance in selecting topics and developing papers. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher presents possible cultural topics and their context. Students meet with their instructor twice during the project. These meetings allow the teacher to monitor the students' progress, as well as their comprehension of the texts. Depending on the reading proficiency of the student, more meetings may be necessary.

Evaluation

When this assignment was conducted in a German class at Washington State, the majority of the students enjoyed the work with Lexis-Nexis, according to their responses to a questionnaire given at the end of the semester: "It was interesting to see how easy it is to get information from such a distance," and "Yes, it was fun, because it is much easier than having to read every article..." Some students did request extra help with their searches, and others enjoyed working in pairs at the computer.

For the students coming directly from lower-division language courses, the complexity of the articles may result in discouragement. Faculty encouragement and individualized assistance with the texts will alleviate many of these students' frustrations. The opportunity for plagiarism is also present in this assignment. Requiring the students to submit copies of the articles they used along with their final papers allows the faculty member to check student comprehension of the material, as well as monitor for plagiarism. Some students may be uninterested in working with a political or cultural topic. These students require extra guidance in the selection of a topic which, even though it is of a political or cultural nature, is still of great interest to the student.

Contributors

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ELECTRONIC DATABASES ON THE INTERNET: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Context

The activities suggested on European Databases work well with intermediate and advanced-level students of Business German. They could also be adapted for students of Danish, Dutch, English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.

Description

Before embarking on the use of databases in teaching, one should think clearly about the objectives one wishes to achieve. These could typically entail one or a combination of the following:

- Teaching the students particular study skills such as searching bibliographic databases, seeking factual information, or supporting project work or dissertations.
- Accessing and downloading new data to use as a resource when searching for any kind of information.
- Enhancing communication with the students
- Dealing with increased student numbers

The European Databases are a non-commercial, publicly-available set of databases with a variety of information in the languages of the European Union. They can be accessed from anywhere in the world via the European Commission's host service, ECHO. To access it just telnet to *echo.lu* and type *echo* when asked for a password. ECHO provides objective multilingual information about Community information services.

Some of the databases which are both useful and free of charge via ECHO are the following:

I'M Guide is a database providing valuable information on databases and databanks. It gives users instant and free access to a wealth of information on services offered within the European information services market. It may be regarded as the "Yellow Pages" of the European Commission.

Euristote is an online directory of over 14,500 theses and studies, both in progress and completed. These theses and studies cover the different areas of Community policy, such as competition law, external relations, and the European institutions.

Eurodicautum is an online terminology databank containing scientific and technical terms, contextual phrases, and abbreviations in all of the official European community languages. The databank is a good resource for terminologists looking for equivalents of particular terms. It is also a good resource for students who have to translate and who need up-to-date translations of scientific and technical terms which may not yet be available in printed form.

The following example using *I'M Guide* illustrate how one can employ authentic materials for the benefit of the learner in a work-related task. Students at the University of Sheffield, UK, were asked to search in the target language for information regarding the German banking system to use as a basis for a project on German banks. For this activity they first needed to employ scanning skills to identify keywords. Once they had found relevant information they downloaded it. After printing it they had to make sure that it was the information they were looking for. They were asked to read for gist which required skimming skills. After finding the information relevant for their projects, they had to analyze it, and more close reading was necessary.

The information was then used to develop three further skills. First, the material was used for discussion work. Secondly, students gave a presentation in the target language from another point of view, for example, that of a banking director. Thirdly, editing and summary writing skills were practiced.

Thus the skills of reading, writing and speaking were employed. In the case of reading, scanning and skimming and close reading for detail were developed. Students also had to demonstrate cataloguing skills. The students will probably find all these skills particularly useful during their final year when preparing dissertations and large projects.

Evaluation

Clear advantages have been observed in using electronic databases. They heighten motivation and offer individual students or small groups the opportunity to revise and reinforce vocabulary, verbs and grammatical structures. They can form part of a circle of activities within a lesson and facilitate independent learning. They also accommodate the needs of students who finish more quickly.

Use of the database helped produce tangible written results without sacrificing the important oral and aural class work; in fact, it stimulated spoken language. Analytical skills, in addition to linguistic skills, were brought into play as students had to analyze results and outcomes making use of pie-charts and count graphs produced by the computer.

There are drawbacks. The databases are not very user-friendly. The Eurodicautum database is not presented in a dictionary form and thus can be particularly difficult to handle. It can take a long time to log on to the databases. The first time they are used tends to be very confusing. However, after a while the usefulness more than makes up for these drawbacks as the databases become relevant and stimulating.

Our experience has demonstrated that the benefits of using a database for these kinds of activities far exceed the disadvantages and there are many other ways in which electronic databases can support creative activity in the language classroom.

In deciding how to use electronic databases, here are some issues to consider:

- What Information Technology (IT) competence is needed for students to undertake this type of activity?
- What IT competence can be developed as a result of it?
- What other IT applications can be incorporated?
- To what extent should the teacher allow the computer to dominate the activity?

- Is the time and effort required to set up the classroom justified by the outcomes?
- How integral is the computer to the range of activities devised?

Contributor

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INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE

Context

The activity discussed below was initially used in an intermediate ESL listening and speaking class, but it could be adapted for most levels of ESL. The database can also be adapted for use in a foreign language classroom.

Description

Movies can enhance listening comprehension because they present oral material more authentically than audio cassettes. In real life most conversations are accompanied with visual cues, and movies can provide students with a means to be exposed to visual and oral input. When using movies for instructional purposes, some very good resources are available on the World Wide Web (WWW). One of the best movie resources is the Internet Movie Database.

The extent to which one can use the WWW in the classroom depends largely upon the equipment that is available in the school. In my case, I didn't have access to a computer classroom, and the computers in the student lab were not hooked up to the Internet. Because of that, I used the WWW in my lesson planning. Ater deciding that I would take class time to watch a movie, I wanted to provide some incentive for the students to pay attention. To that end, I wanted to create a worksheet with questions that would assess understanding of both main ideas and details. Instead of watching the movie to determine questions to ask, however, I searched the Internet using the WWW directory YAHOO at: *http://www.yahoo.com* and found "The Internet Movie Database" located at *http://www.msstate.edu/Movies*.

This database contains information on over 40,000 movie titles including about 15,000 foreign films. There are varying degrees of information about each movie. Some have plot summaries and critiques while others have only the title and the year it was made.

I used the database to find the movie we were going to watch. Fortunately, it had a detailed summary of the plot which I used as a reference for the worksheet I was writing. I also used the critiques I found as a basis for class discussion after we finished watching the movie. After my initial exposure to the database, I have consulted it regularly to determine how suitable a movie might be for use in the classroom.

If students have access to computers with Internet connections, the database could be used for other activities. The students could be assigned to read summaries of different movies and write questions based on what they have read. The teacher could then combine those questions to form a worksheet for the students fill out as they watch the movie. Upper level students could use the critiques in the database as models, and then write their own critiques.

The database also lists the movies that an individual actor has been in. The teacher could assign students to choose their favorite actor and find at least two movies that she or he has been in. The student could then watch the movies as homework, and compare and contrast the actor's performance in each film. In a foreign language classroom, the database could be used in a slightly different manner. The database contains a list of movies based on their country of origin. Since the information about the movie is written in English, the database would not expose the student to the written language. However, many of the foreign films do not have summaries or critiques yet. A teacher could let the students watch the film, write a summary of it, and submit it to the database so others could benefit from the information.

Evaluation

As mentioned previously, the only way I have been able to use the database has been as a tool for lesson planning. The information I found on it has helped me select appropriate movies for my students and develop better ways to use them in class. In situations where the students themselves have Internet access, further benefits should accrue.

Contributor

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET VIA GOPHER

Context

Latin America Literary Masterpieces is an upper-division Spanish-language course primarily for Spanish majors and minors. However, the project might be appropriate for any literature course which has a research component.

Description

The goal of the project was two-fold. First, students were introduced to the concept of literary research by having to prepare bibliographies of works by and criticism of authors whom we read in class. Secondly, they became familiar with information retrieval via the Internet by using Gopher to connect with online library catalogues of important research institutions. Gopher is a menu-driven utility that connects users to information sources on the Internet. This application is particularly useful for bibliographic searches because library catalogues can generally be easily found in such menu systems.

Each student was assigned a series of authors for whom they were required to prepare a bibliography for distribution in class. As part of the project, students were introduced to computer formatting and style conventions. The instructor introduced students to Gopher and suggested several sites which might yield the information the students required. Particularly useful in Latin American literature are the libraries of the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of California at Berkeley.

To reach these sites students tunneled through the geographical levels of Gopher. For example, to connect with the University of Wisconsin catalogue, one selects *United States*, then *Wisconsin*, and finally *University of Wisconsin-Madison* at the appropriate level. There are many other fine research libraries in the US and other countries; in addition to the announced sites, students were encouraged to explore other areas and find additional resources.

In many cases, students in the humanities feel uncomfortable with technology and often do not have the same opportunities for access as students in the sciences. Bibliographic research could have been performed on our home campus, but remote access to the catalogues of major research libraries widened the possibilities of finding material, and gave students the reason to begin exploring the capabilities of the Gopher system.

Evaluation

The vast majority of students in the class had no prior experience with the Internet; several had little prior use of computers. The success of the project corresponded directly to each student's level of comfort with the machines. Less-motivated students did not seek assistance when they were faced with system problems, and the instructor did not have adequate time and resources to train novices. However, students who persevered discovered information sources beyond the library catalogues which they were able to use. They found the Internet to be a research tool that they would use in the future. As they acquired the habit of logging on, they were able to integrate the use of the Internet into a variety of academic and personal activities.

Contributor

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AN ELECTRONIC LIBRARY FOR A DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND HISTORY IN MEXICO

Context

The Library services a department of approximately 400 students studying for their bachelor's and master's degrees in international relations and history, and, increasingly, students in other departments.

Description

University of the Americas began life as Mexico City College in the 1940s. At one time its student body was largely American. Now its students are 80% Mexican but it has retained a bilingual approach and is the only university in Mexico fully accredited by American accrediting agencies. The majority of Internet resources of use in developing a collection on international affairs are in English. Much of the most valuable discussion about NAFTA and immigration issues is only available in English. The decision was made to let the chips fall where they may and consequently the online electronic resources are 80% in English. The consequence has been that the English side of the university has been markedly strengthened. The Internet provides, in the judgement of many teachers, the biggest incentive for learning English that the students have ever had.

Commencing in August of 1993, we began to create a electronic library that would be useful to students in the Department of International Relations and History, as well as to students in other fields. This has been done by harvesting articles from the Internet, scanning into the computer relevant articles and books, and buying already scanned material from the several small cottage-industry scanning operations that have been started in the last couple years. The Library includes past examinations, syllabi, and the best of student essays. There are sections on overseas scholarships, how to write papers, where to find Gophers and other Internet sites, and a forum for student discussions.

Evaluation

There are several important points to make about this project. First, it is located in Mexico and thus it represents an answer for a situation where reference sources are limited and where there are long time delays and considerable troubles in ordering materials. Second, the international relations field has been changing so fast since the collapse of the Soviet Union that no "wood pulp" can keep up with the developments. Third, it enforces the use of information technology in a way that no other method can, since students must use the computer if they plan to pass their courses.

The student reaction has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The project has caused an explosion in student e-mail accounts and in the use of off-campus modems. By limiting the Library to straight "plain vanilla" ASCII, we believe we have best served the university community since expensive machines have not been required for access. We have found that fast-breaking major events (e.g., the signing of the NAFTA treaty, the devaluation of the peso) can be included in the Library. This has markedly improved the quality of teaching. We are absolutely sure that developing a departmental library has an important positive effect on the curriculum. It circumvents such standard problems as late arrival of ordered books and the university's inability to order enough copies of conventional books for the library to meet the needs of large classes.

At the start, going "cold turkey" and changing all at once over to a completely electronic format has advantages: if you compromise and present a reading list which is partially on computer and partially in conventional format, it weakens the effort to win acceptance for electronic media. And we especially urge that such a project be supported by having a computer and overhead projector setup in the classroom, as actual demonstration is the best answer to many questions. Finally, teachers and administration must realize that like any new project there has to be a considerable commitment of time. Just now, having built up the syllabi and the electronic sources, we are starting to see some relief in our workload. At the beginning there is far more work required than with a conventional sources. Success depends on understanding this. The incentive in developing an electronic library was to bolster courses in international relations and history. The unanticipated benefit has been to provide a powerful motivator for English studies.

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TRAVELING THE WORLD (WIDE WEB)

GERMAN GEOGRAPHY ON THE NET

Context

This activity was used with 1st-year German students at the University of North Carolina.

Description

The Internet provides a cornucopia of exciting new opportunities to individualize the learning process and involve students in challenging communicative scenarios. The World Wide Web in particular provides a fascinating spectrum of interdisciplinary study sites, including up-to-date links to foreign newspapers, popular culture exhibits, and other authentic realia which teachers have long known foster students' motivations for mastering second languages.

It was in the spring of 1994 that I first wandered out with my German language students onto the information superhighway, and explored the Internet as a training tool. The venture generated an invigorating array of interactive activities suitable for all levels of instruction from the elementary language class to the advanced literature and culture course.

In order to reflect the broad possibilities for Internet based laboratory activities, I will focus in the following three entries on three exercises for three levels of foreign language instruction which involve primarily the World Wide Web and e-mail student exchanges. The exercises center on reading, writing, and oral report assignments for elementary, intermediate and advanced German classes. The format, scope and depth of the suggested activities are quite flexible and can easily be adapted to suit the interests and preferences of individual instructors for other foreign languages.

Each exercise directs students to access the Internet through a browser such as Netscape, and to send, receive, and read e-mail messages on laboratory computers. Prior to engaging students in these activities, I organize 1-hour workshops on accessing the Internet and sending e-mail messages. These workshops form part of my course introductions during the first week of class and are held during regular class hours to accommodate students' schedules. The exercises are then assigned as homework activities once a week and can be carried out individually or in groups. The grading procedures are the same as for any other homework assignment.

In the first exercise, students research the Internet to obtain a geographical profile of a city in a German speaking country of their choice. They download the document, write a short German report describing the contents, and bring the document and their report to class for an oral presentation.

The activity was assigned as a homework activity to be carried either individually or in a group. It is designed to take about 35 minutes to complete.

There are three parts to this exercise. Part one consists of a research assignment on the world wide web: Students go to a computer laboratory on campus, and open the Internet browser Netscape to enter the web. There they explore the geography of a city of their choice in Austria, Germany or Switzerland. Students are asked to bring an empty disk to download and print their document from the web. They begin their search for information by entering one of the following URLs:

For information on German cities:
http://www.chemie.fu-berlin.de/adressen/brd.html (Germany and Geography)
http://www.city.net/countries/germany/ (City Net, Germany)

Information on Austrian cities:
http://www.city.net/countries/austria/ (City Net, Austria)
http://www.cosy.sbg.ac.at/directories/austria.html (Austrian Info Systems)
http://www.idv.uni-linz.ac.at/Austria/AThome.html (Austria, Tourist Info)

Information on Swiss cities:
http://heiwww.unige.ch/switzerland/ (Switzerland, Home Page)
http://www.city.net/countries/switzerland/ (City Net, Switzerland)

It usually takes less than 10 URL jumps in the Web to find what one is looking for. It can happen, however, that individual connections may be slow to open due to heavy traffic on the net, in which case students should turn to alternate URL addresses to pursue their inquiries.

Part two of the activity consists of a written homework assignment. Each students is asked to compose a 100-word German essay describing the contents of his or her WWW document. The essay should focus on interesting geographical, architectural, and cultural aspects of the selected city. It should contain answers to the following questions, and be written in short but correct sentences.

QUESTIONS / *FRAGEN*

1. Which city did you visit? *Welche Stadt besuchten Sie im Internet?*
2. What is the location of this city? *Wo liegt die Stadt?*
3. How many people live in this city? *Wie groß ist die Stadt?*
4. What geographical and cultural sights does the document describe? *Welche Sehenswürdigkeiten beschreibt das Dokument?*
5. What information (geographical, historical, cultural, social) did you find most/least interesting? *Welche Informationen über diese Stadt fanden Sie interessant oder langweilig?*

Part three of this exercise involves the preparation of an oral report for class. After printing their WWW documents, and composing descriptive essays in German, students prepare short oral reports by addressing the same questions as listed above. The setting for these oral reports are group presentation and discussion sessions in class. For the class meeting, students are asked to bring both their WWW documents and their essays to class as support for their talks. The group presentations should be delivered in German and should not take longer than 2 minutes each.

Evaluation

This assignment counts as a regular quiz or homework assignment. The WWW printout in part one and the essay in part two each counts for one half of the grade. Part three, the oral report, is ungraded, and counts for practice only.

The Internet advantage: Students have access to an almost unlimited pool of geographical and cultural resource materials which they can explore at their own pace. The availability of multilingual instructions and user guides on the net allows even reluctant learners to find their way through the exhibits and pursue those topics which are closest to their own interest be it popular culture, architecture, people, sports, tourist sites, or media. The interdisciplinary scope and open-ended hypertext structure of these city archives is far superior to anything a regular textbook can offer. Students can partake in virtual city tours, look at illustrated brochures, visit virtual meeting places, read newspapers and historical notes, and utilize their language skills to navigate around the net.

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GERMAN AREA STUDIES ON THE NET

Context

This activity was used with 2nd-year German students at the University of North Carolina.

Description

In this activity, students research the Internet using the World Wide Web browser Netscape to obtain facts, figures, dates, and information pertaining to Germany and the European Union (EU). They visit selected archives on the EUnet to complete a questionnaire. Each student is asked to write a short essay commenting on his or her research, post it via e-mail to the course's listserv, and bring a printout of the essay to class for a presentation and discussion session.

There are numerous archives on the web which provide information pertaining to the political, social and economic developments in Germany and Europe after the end of the Cold War (1948–1990). Students are directed towards URL's (web addresses) which are good starting points for their searches.

Before engaging students in this activity, however, it is useful to review the following socio-political background: The post-war trend towards European integration began in 1957 with the formation of the first European Economic Community. It included the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux states (Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg). Between 1972 and 1989, six more nations joined the European Community (EC), including Denmark, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain. The demise of Eastern Europe's communist block following the revolutions of 1989 created an entirely new framework for inter-European collaboration and integration. However, the political shifts not only led to new alliances but also brought new frictions and divisions. The Czech and Slovak division, the Yugoslavian civil wars, and the break-up of the former Soviet Union were all fuelled by new nationalist movements violently opposed to the notion of ethnic pluralism within a united Europe. Despite these setbacks, however, a new milestone for the creation of a European Union (EU) was reached in the early nineties with the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht. The EU accord prepared the way for an integrated market based on the free exchange of goods and services. Final political and monetary unity is planned for the end of this century. Among the members of the EU, Germany has taken a leading role in support of these measures. Austria recently joined the EU, while Switzerland opted to remain neutral and outside.

The first part of this exercise consists of filling out a student questionnaire based on information found in the World Wide Web: Students are asked to go to a computer laboratory on campus, and open the Internet browser Netscape to enter the web. There they explore appropriate archives to find answers to the questions (See appendix A). In oder to find the correct answers, students begin their search by entering one of the cited URL's (see Appendix B). This inquiries on the net should be completed within 35 minutes.

The second part of this exercise consists of a written homework assignment: Students write an essay commenting on interesting EU facts and figures they found on the Internet, and describe their thoughts and reactions pertaining to this subject matter. The essays should bear a descriptive title, be composed in German, and cover approximately one page in length. Students print out their essays and bring copies to class for the next meeting.

The third part of this exercise requires students to post their essays on the course's listserv. This provides everyone in class with the chance to read each other's essays and send reader response messages. Each class member is responsible for reading three posted essays (their choice), and sending three short reader response commentaries to the authors. The e-mail commentaries can be written in German or English.

Evaluation

This assignment counts as a regular composition assignment. The World Wide Web questionnaire in part one and the essay in part two each counts for one half of the grade. Part three, the listserv activities, is ungraded and counts for practice only.

Engaging in active research on the World Wide Web to study current topics prompts students to scan documents from many archives, compare and contrast political perspectives, and pursue critical inquiries at the click of a button. The ease and speed of establishing these virtual connections together with the wealth of resources available on screen provides an ideal setting for self-paced learning activities. Moreover, writing and posting their research reports on the listserv creates an interactive communicative scenario and motivates students to write for an audience of peers rather than the grade book of the instructor. Reading and evaluating each other's compositions establishes a supportive group dynamic among students and leads to more animated and informed discussions during class.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire / *Fragebogen*

1. _______ When was the European Union founded? *Wann wurde die "Europäische Union" gegründet?*
2. _______ How many states are currently members of the EU? *Wieviele Mitgliedsstaaten hat heute die "Europäische Union"?*
3. _______ When were Germany's five new states (former GDR) integrated into the EU? *Wann wurden die fünf neuen BRD-Bundesländer (ex-DDR) in die EU integriert?*
4. _______ When did Austria become a member state of the EU? *Wann wurde Österreich Mitglied der EU?*

5. _______ Which city houses the "European Parliament"? *In welcher Stadt tagt das "Europäische Parlament"?*

6. _______ Where (which country) does the current president of the "European Parliament" come from? *Aus welchem Land stammt der derzeitige Präsident des "Europäischen Parlaments"?*

7. (a) _____ How many representatives of the "European Parliament" come from (a) Germany, (b) France, (c) Spain? *Wieviele Mitglieder des "Europäischen Parlaments" kommen aus der BRD, aus Frankreich, aus Spanien?*
   (b) _____
   (c) _____

8. _______ Which city is the home for the "European Commission", the administrative center of the European Union (former European Community)? *In welcher Stadt arbeitet die Europäische Kommission — die Verwaltungszentrale und "Regierung" der Europäischen Union (früher Europäische Gemeinschaft)?*

9. _______ When was the "Treaty of Maastricht" signed? *Wann wurde der "Vertrag von Maastricht" unterschrieben?*

10. _______ In which country does Maastricht lie? *In welchem Land liegt Maastricht?*

After filling out this questionnaire, students prepare a printout, and bring it to class.

Appendix B: URLs for the Questionnaire

EU Basics:
http://www.vub.ac.be/CSNMIT/eubasics.html

EU and other organisations:
http://www.vub.ac.be/CSNMIT/eubasics-b.html

Information Market Europe Home Page:
http://www.echo.lu/

Information about the EU:
http://www.echo.lu/eudocs/en/eudocshome.html

European Parliament Fact Sheets:
http://www.echo.lu/parliament/en/epsheets.html

European Link Collection:
http://www.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/AEGEE/EUROPE/euro-collection.html

POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES ON THE NET

Context

Advanced German (3rd and 4th year), up to 15 students

Description

This activity involves research on the Internet (using a World Wide Web browser such as Netscape) to find archives and discussion lists focusing on specific issues in the field of German popular culture. Students focus on selected issues, write analyses of their research findings, post essays via e-mail on a class listserv, and write commentaries on posted essays of other class members.

This exercise deals with the study of minority affairs in Germany after the fall of the Wall. The activity involves the World Wide Web to research this subject matter, collect selected texts, realia, and bibliographical references from German archives, and write an analytical essay to be posted on the listserv of the class. Before students gather information on the net, they are asked to read listserv lecture notes (entitled, for example, "Foreigners in Germany: Cultural and Historical Notes") which have been posted throughout the course of the semester, and contain references to WWW resource archives and materials.

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

There are four parts to this exercise.

Part I consists of collecting information and composing an analytical essay on minority affairs in today's Germany: Students go to a computer laboratory on campus and open an Internet browser to enter the web. They visit appropriate archives and collect data and quotes for use in their analytical essays. They are asked to download, print, and attach two WWW documents to their papers which they found most useful or interesting. The exercise begins by visiting one of the selected WWW archives:

Archiv gegen Ausländerfeindlichkeit, archive against xenophobia:
gopher://pfsparc02.phil15.uni-sb.de/11/gopher-projekt/Aktuelles/courage

Modern Neo-Nazi Groups:
gopher://jerusalem1.datasrv.co.il/11/fight/fash

Current News Clippings on Foreigner Debates in Germany:
gopher://jerusalem1.datasrv.co.il/11/fight/fash/germ/news

Internet news service of the "Deutsche Welle":
http://www-dw.gmd.de/cgi-bin/listfolder/deutsch/news/19950316.html?a002

German News since 1993:
http://www.rz.uni-karlsruhe.de/misc/germnews/

German student newspapers:
http://www.econ.uni-hamburg.de/huz/andere.html

While surfing the net, students collect three text quotes to integrate into their papers, and prepare printouts of two of the most useful documents to present to class for the next meeting.

Part II consists of a written homework assignment: Each class member writes an analytical essay commenting on the subject matter of "Minorities and Minority Affairs in Post-Unification Germany". The papers should bear descriptive titles, be composed in German, cover approximately two typed pages, and contain at least three text quotes from archive documents obtained from the net. Printing the paper and bringing a copy of it to class concludes this part of the exercise.

Part III requires the posting of two WWW research documents together with student essays on the class listserv. The two documents and the paper should be mailed under separate covers with descriptive subject headings. This provides everyone in class with the chance to evaluate each other's work and to send reader response messages. Each class member is responsible for reading two posted essays (their choice), and writing two commentaries. The first commentary pertains to a posted paper, and the other must be on a posted research document (their choice). The e-mail commentaries must be written in German and should clearly identify the selected documents in the subject headings. Students are asked to present an oral summary of their listserv activities at the next class meeting. The talks focus on the following questions: Which documents and papers did you read and respond to on the listserv? Which posted materials and arguments pertaining to the topic of "Minorities and Minority Affairs in Post-Unification Germany"did you find most interesting or convincing? Which open ended questions or counter-arguments do you submit to the discussion?

Evaluation

This exercise is graded as three assignments. Part I (WWW research documents) and III (listserv activities) count as one homework assignment each. Part II (paper) counts as a regular essay assignment.

INTERNET ADVANTAGE

The wealth of information posted on the web is far more inclusive than the printed resources available at most campuses. Beside current newspaper articles, journal essays, and archive commentaries, the discussion groups on the web provide exceptionally good resources for popular culture studies. The up-to-date content matter in these archives, presented in a variety of media, provides students with authentic insights into the cultural, social, and political context informing the debates. By posting their findings through e-mail on the listserv, and evaluating their works within a publicized forum, students get motivated to engage in scholarly debates.

This can be particularly useful in larger courses where discussion in the classroom is hard to begin and sustain. Of particular value for jump-starting discussions is the instructor's encouragement to respond to other students' writings through e-mail. In this way, the act of writing is geared toward a larger audience and becomes a meaningful exercise in communicating with one's peers. If a respondent misreads a particular argument, the author of the paper often finds new motivation for improving his or her work. The teacher in this situation becomes more of a mediator and collaborator, and less of a critic and judge.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of the Internet as a virtual connector to foreign cultures, and the expansion of classroom communications into the e-mail forum create entirely new dimensions for teaching and learning. The many applications of the World Wide Web make it possible to link classrooms to language resources across the globe, to interact with students at other colleges who are taking similar courses, and to exchange ideas and critical insights through electronic discussion groups. As we cast our communicative nets ever wider, searching for contacts to foreign cultures across the globe, the spectrum of voices from otherwise obscure individuals helps us recognize our similarities and learn tolerance for our differences.

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Appendix: More Information

To receive further information on the implementation of these WWW exercises, send an e-mail message entitled "Virtual Connection Inquiry" to:
lixlpurc@fagan.uncg.edu.

For a list of the most useful German Studies resources on the World Wide Web, consult my WWW Home Page at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, located at this URL address:
http://www.uncg.edu/~lixlpurc/german.html.

The list is entitled "German Studies Trails on the Internet" and contains many links to German language, literature, culture, film, art, music, and education resources. It also provides access to popular German magazines, libraries, university archives, and other points of interest on the Web.

READING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOUND IN THE INTERNET

Context

The activity described below was originally used in intermediate Japanese classes at the University of Texas at Austin. It can be adapted to any level of Japanese.

Description

The fj* (from Japan) newsgroups and the World Wide Web (WWW) pages are excellent sources for Japanese language instruction because they contain a variety of original and unedited authentic materials. A teacher can surf through those pages to select and compile reading materials appropriate for his or her class level.

Students were to find the reading material in the Internet assigned by the teacher as homework, read the material and answer the questions prepared by the teacher, and produce a personal glossary of the reading material using AutoGloss/J (glossary producer developed by Professor Hatasa at the Purdue University) and MacJDic (online Japanese dictionary developed by Dan Creiver at the Harvard University).

In one application of this activity, the WWW reading material selected by the teacher was "Official Mascot of the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan" located at *http://www.linc.or.jp/Nagano/snowlets-j.html*. Students read the assigned material and produced a glossary using AugoGloss /J and MacJDic (see Appendix). Next, students answered in English the following questions prepared by the teacher:

1. What are "Snowlets"?
2. What did the writer say about the owls?
3. List four meanings of the name "Snowlets", according to the text.

Students performed similar tasks using different pages related to the Nagano Olympics. They read and answered the questions about

- the overall outline of the Nagano Olympics:
  http://www.linc.or.jp/Nagano/outline-j.html
- the events to be competed:
  http://www.linc.or.jp/Nagano/events-j.html
- how to access the City of Nagano:
  http://www.linc.or.jp/Nagano/transportation-j.html
- and other Olympic related news:
  http://www.linc.or.jp/ Nagano/ News/News-idx-j.html

Other reading, question and answer, and glossary production assignments involved:

- Newsgroup articles (*fj.rec.food*) on good restaurants in the West Coast of the USA;
- Newsgroup articles (*fj.rec.travel.japan*) on theme parks for children in and around Tokyo;
- U.S.–Japan Tour Ads:
  http://www.tomio.com/YOMIDEN/ryoko.html;

- Kobe earthquake — for visual information:
  http://itcw3.aist-nara.ac.jp/earthquake/ images/ newimage.html
  — and for written information:
  http://itcw3.aist-nara.ac.jp/ earthquake/fj-misc/summary-kobe.html
- Nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway:
  http://www.opendoors.eccosys.com/gas/index.html

This activity requires a Macintosh computer (system 7.0 or above), a connection to the Internet (either by modem or Ethernet), and a Japanese language operating system such as Japanese Language Kit or KanjiTalk (both of which are commercial products.) It also requires the following software which can be downloaded for free via anonymous FTP:

- Netscape — Japanese capable WWW browser available from:
  ftp.netscape.com/Netscape1.1b3
- NewsWatcher — Japanese capable newsgroup reader available from
  ftp.taiiku.tsukuba.ac.jp/pub/newswatcher
- YooEdit or Edit–7 — Japanese capable text editor that can handle a large amount of text available from:
  ftp.ora.com/pub/examples/nutshell/ujip/mac
- AutoGloss/J — glossary producer available from:
  130.158.168.253/pub
- MacJDic — online Japanese dictionary available from:
  ftp.uwtc.washington.edu/pub/Mac/Japanese

Evaluation

Most of the comments from the students indicate that the authentic materials found in WWW or fj newsgroups increased their interest and motivation in reading in Japanese. Their positive attitudes seem to be based on several factors:

1. Speed: The use of AutoGloss/J and MacJDic allow students to read the text faster since their feedback is quick. Looking up a word in a regular (hard copy) dictionary takes a longer time and is cumbersome.
2. Challenge: The amount of exposure to comprehensive input has been increased and students enjoy reading the material which is challenging but not too intimidating.
3. Variety of topics: The content of the materials deal with the current issues, which often leads to the further inquiry of cultural information.
4. Visual effects: Many WWW pages are accompanied by colorful pictures or illustrations.

Teachers need to be patient until all the students master using the computer and and Internet resources. If the class size is small, the teacher may want to let students submit their answers to the questions by e-mail instead of hard copy to allow more flexible interaction between student and teacher.

Contributor

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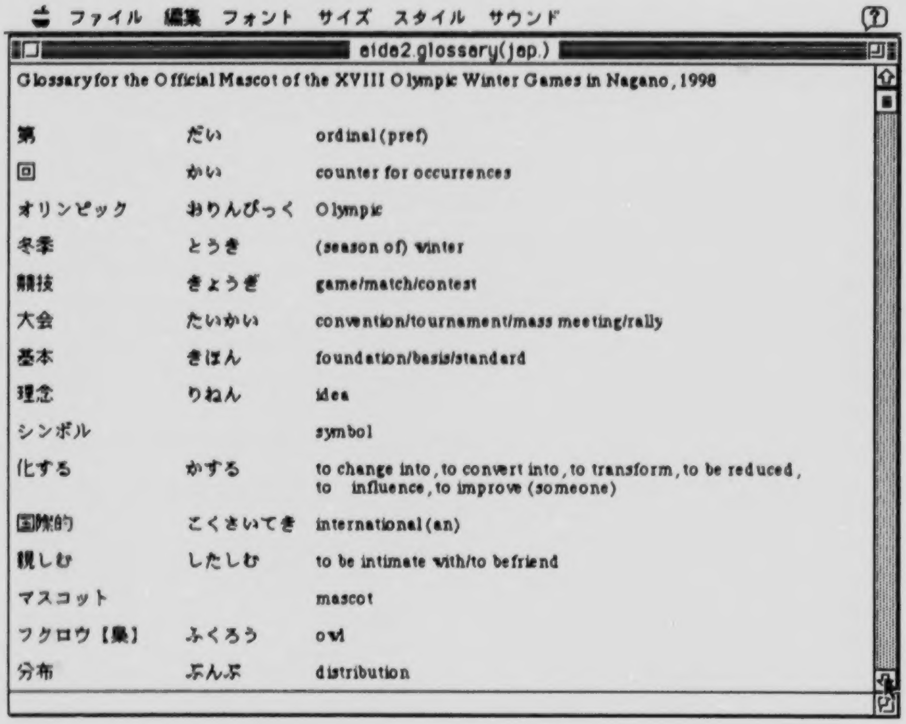
Appendix: A Sample Glossary



Glossary for the Official Mascot of the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, 1998

第	だい	ordinal (pref)
回	かい	counter for occurrences
オリンピック	おりんぴっく	Olympic
冬季	とうき	(season of) winter
競技	きょうぎ	game/match/contest
大会	たいかい	convention/tournament/mass meeting/rally
基本	きほん	foundation/basis/standard
理念	りねん	idea
シンボル		symbol
化する	かする	to change into, to convert into, to transform, to be reduced, to influence, to improve (someone)
国際的	こくさいてき	international (an)
親しむ	したしむ	to be intimate with/to befriend
マスコット		mascot
フクロウ【梟】	ふくろう	owl
分布	ぶんぷ	distribution

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A VIRTUAL TRAVEL ACTIVITY IN JAPANESE USING THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Context

This activity is designed to encourage learners of Japanese to make use of authentic information about Japan through the World Wide Web and stimulate their voluntary use of the Web in order to obtain new knowledge about Japan according to their own interests. This activity is appropriate for the students in the 2nd-year or higher levels of a college Japanese course, especially at institutions outside of Japan.

Description

"Chiba Bay Area Information" (1994 Toyo Engineering Corporation) is a World Wide Web page with information about Makuhari Messa, which is the first comprehensive convention center in Japan, as well as information on transportation, hotels, restaurants and entertainment in this area. "Chiba Bay Area Information" is found at

http://www.toyo-eng.co.jp/NewHome/Messe/UsefulInfo/index-j.html.

This activity uses the Chiba Web page in order to help students:

- practice the skill of obtaining necessary information by skimming Japanese texts
- briefly report their results of the activity in Japanese
- gain familiarity with Japan in general
- exchange information with each other and have a discussion in Japanese (if the students' Japanese proficiency is high enough)

This project work consists of three phases. First, the instructor explains to the class what they should do to accomplish the project. Second, the students work on the project in groups outside the class. Finally, each group briefly reports the project in Japanese in class.

In the first phase, the instructor gives the students a brief introduction to the World Wide Web and explains how to reach the specific site and to go through the information there. The instructor then explains the goal of the project, which is that each group of three or four students should make a detailed schedule for a weekend in Chiba Bay Area by referring to the information provided in the Web site mentioned above. The schedule should include time, places to visit, restaurants, hotels, activities, and expenses. The students are encouraged to read the Japanese version. However, if they have difficulty understanding it, they can refer to the English version as well. The schedule should be submitted the next class time the class meets. At the same time, each group should also briefly report their plan in Japanese.

The students are provided the following context:

A WEEKEND IN THE CHIBA BAY AREA

The Situation

- You have just finished your business in Japan and have two extra days (Saturday and Sunday) before going back to the US.
- You are planning to spend two days in Chiba Bay Area.
- You are at a hotel close to the Tokyo railway station right now.
- Your budget is 50,000 yen.
- Your flight to the US is at 1:00 p.m. next Monday from Narita (New Tokyo) International Airport.

The Activity

Each group should make a plan about how to spend two days in Chiba Bay Area by utilizing the information provided in this site, and complete a detailed schedule from 8:00 a.m. on Saturday to 1:00 p.m. on Monday in Japanese. The schedule should contain the following information:

- how to go to Chiba Bay Area from your hotel located near the Tokyo railway station
- where to stay for two nights in Chiba Bay Area
- what to see or what to do in this area
- what to eat and where
- how to go to the airport from this area
- expenses for activities, hotels, restaurants, and transportation, and the total for two days
- the reasons for each choice

Restrictions

- You cannot spend more than 50,000 yen.
- You must get on the reserved flight.
- You should make sure that the facilities or restaurants that you plan to go to will be open.

In the second phase, the students work in groups in order to accomplish the project in a week. They can arrange the time to go to the computer laboratory together and make their plan based on information that they find at the Chiba Bay Web site.

Finally, the individual groups give a 10-minute presentation in Japanese about their respective plan while showing their schedule sheet on the overhead projector. They explain why they have chosen certain activities, hotels, and restaurants. The other students are encouraged to ask questions. After the report, the groups turn in the schedule sheet they have made.

Evaluation

This project work can be implemented in a college Japanese course as a classroom activity or homework. The students might come across sentence patterns and vocabulary items that they have not learned while searching for information. However, most of the information necessary to accomplish the project is in the form of a time table, price list, map, and so on, which are relatively easy to read once the students get used to the Japanese style or way of presenting such information. The students' performance would be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Did each group make full use of the information provided at the site?
- Did each group make a plan according to the conditions?
- Did each group report their plan in a well-organized fashion?

This project work could provide an opportunity for the students to experience the feeling that they have accomplished a task by making use of up-to-date information about Japan. This experience should stimulate their interests in Japan and motivation for learning Japanese as well as using the World Wide Web.

Final note: When many computers try to access the same Web site simultaneously, the response time may slow down considerably or the access may even be refused. Therefore, when working with a large class, it may be advisable to let the individual groups work outside of class.

Contributor

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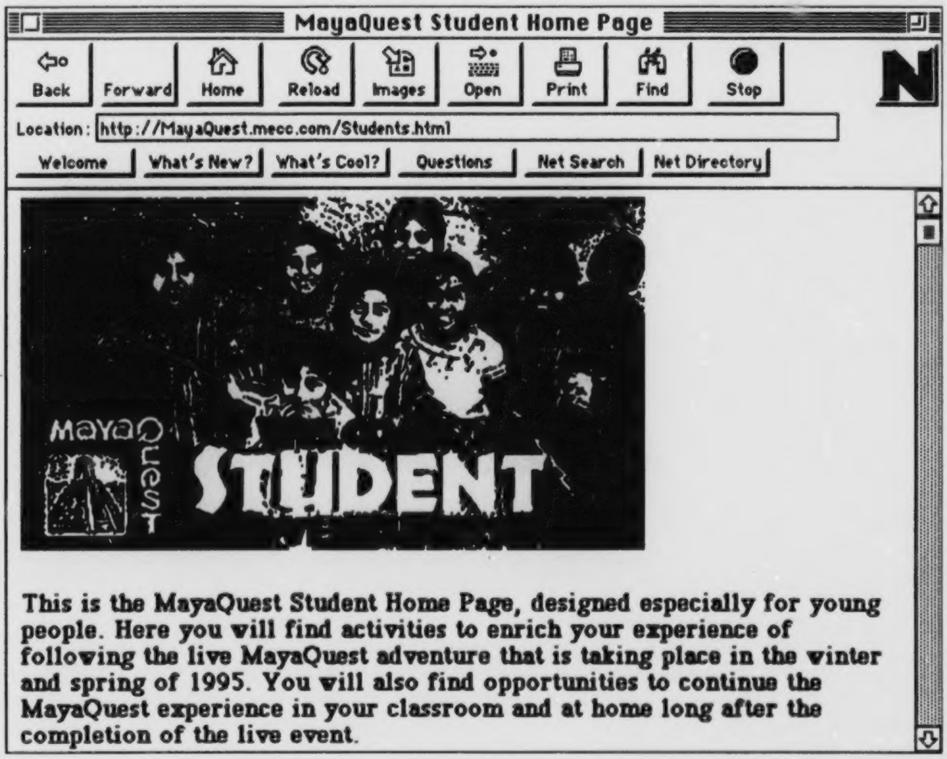
MAYAQUEST: EXPLORING THE YUCATAN VIA THE INTERNET

Context

High School, Spanish 2.

Description


MayaQuest Student Home Page
Back
Forward
Home
Reload
Images
Open
Print
Find
Stop
N
Welcome
What's New?
What's Cool?
Questions
Net Search
Net Directory
MayaQuest
STUDENT

Location: http://MayaQuest.mecc.com/Students.html

This is the MayaQuest Student Home Page, designed especially for young people. Here you will find activities to enrich your experience of following the live MayaQuest adventure that is taking place in the winter and spring of 1995. You will also find opportunities to continue the MayaQuest experience in your classroom and at home long after the completion of the live event.

Have you and your students ever dreamed of being an Indiana Jones, trekking through the hot, steamy tropical jungle, braving insects and poisonous snakes and howler monkeys to explore ancient Maya ruins? Here's your chance! The MayaQuest Team, sponsored by the Minnesota Educational Computer Corporation (MECC), gave over 40,000 schools around the world the chance to be interactive arm-chair travelers via the Internet. For us the cost was absolutely nothing since we used my regular Internet connection. (Those who used Prodigy or other commercial servers had to pay by the hour.)

Dan Buettner, Tim Buettner, and Archeologist Julie Akuff and other guest archeologists bicycled through the Yucatan and Guatemala from February through the end of May, 1995. Here's something "Indy" never dreamed of: they reported back daily using a lap-top computer

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hooked up to a portable satellite dish! (The people on Prodigy were even able to VOTE on where the team would go next.)

The pre-trip project began long before this with schools gathering information on the Maya, and the post-trip could continue indefinitely since MECC is producing bilingual CD rom simulation software and other materials for schools to use in Spanish and English.

The curriculum for our 2nd- year Spanish students includes a 9-day cultural unit on MexicO (including the history of the Maya and Aztecs) which I modified to emphasize the Maya utilizing bi-lingual resources from MayaQuest and our University of Wisconsin Center for Latin America.

On Day 1, I introduced the MayaQuest Project to my students giving them handouts from the free MQ lesson plans which I had sent for from MECC. I explained that it is an interactive project using the Internet to ask questions of the archeologists bicycling through the Yucatan in search of the reason for the so-called collapse of the great Maya civilization in the 9th century. We would be following them via the Internet, an 800 phone number we could use to call for updates, and some satellite broadcasts live (or on video tape) from the Yucatan.

We read some background information on the Maya and the Popol Vuh Creation Myth Legend and I explained the their final project. They were to either create a scale model of a Maya Pyramid or to draw a short story using six hieroglyphs of their idea of why the Maya civilization collapsed. The projects would be presented to the class on day 7.

On Days 2–6 the students viewed some videos supplied by the University of Wisconsin: "Sentinales de Silencio", the "Living Maya", "Daughters of Ixchel", and the National Geographic "Maya". We discussed the videos and some accompanying worksheets to learn some background on the Maya of yesterday and today.

On Day 7 they presented their projects which were very creative! We had pyramids made out of Legos, marshmallows, styrofoam, popsicle sticks, wood, cardboard, clay, and sugar cubes and even done with computer graphics. There were hieroglyphs telling of volcanoes and earthquakes and floods and war and pestilence.

On Day 8 a local TV reporter and his camera man were here interviewing and viewing projects; then we went down to the computer room to access MayaQuest on the Internet. We used a text-only access and the students read some updates on the Quest in English and in Spanish. They typed some questions in Spanish to the team and sent them to MayaQuest using e-mail.

On Day 9 the students took a test on the Maya to end up the formal unit. But the MayaQuest project continued as a presence in the class until the end of May. In February, a large map of the Yucatan and Guatemala was posted on the bulletin board with individual student maps charting the team's progress. Weekly updates either given to students on paper or shown via computer and LCD monitor.

In March, there were weekly updates on progress, and discussions and questions for bikers were typed and sent by the teacher. In April, Air Mosaic and Netscape Graphic updates were saved on disks and shown with LCD monitor for updates. Students watched the video, *El Norte*, (in Spanish with English subtitles) on the modern Maya struggle with warfare and escape to the US.

From April to May, we continued to use Air Mosaic for live access to MayaQuest graphics and information and Spanish *charla* page. In May, we watched videos from the Satellite coverage of MQ updates in Spanish and English. We made Maya Calendar Rounds using cutouts from the *San Diego Museum of Man* Maya book and HyperCard stacks translating the Maya calander and hieroglyphics to modern calendar dates.

Evaluation

PROS

During the "winter blahs" of February the MQ project injected real interest into the Mexico unit. It made the Maya very real to the students. They could follow the archeologists' adventures from pyramid to caves to burial site, to Julie getting lost in the jungle, then could ask questions via the Internet and get quick responses. Some of the other Spanish classes translated some of the Popol Vuh and other Maya myths and posted them for us to read!

When we finally had graphic access to the Internet through Air Mosaic and then Netscape (via my PPP/SLIP account) it was even better since they could actually see the bikers and the pyramids. Pictures of Maya children and the letters they wrote to MQ in Spanish telling about their school were especially interesting.

CONS

1. There was no easy access to a computer with a modem. We could not use the IBM or Mac lab during class time so we had to use it during students' study hall time.
2. We had to print a lot of the updates and information since we sometimes had limited access to a computer and projection equipment.
3. Early access with just script was OK but not as interesting as the graphic access we had after March.
4. We had no access to the Satellite videos since our school does not have a dish and local cable did not carry it. So we had to purchase them from Minnesota.
5. Not as much of the Spanish *charla* was used as we thought there would be since they had some difficulties with it.

But, "where there's a will there's a way" and eventually when our school gets its own Internet and Graphic access which we are able to use during class time, it will be easier to participate in Internet projects. (I had used my own personal Internet and Netscape access.) The technology is just coming in to our school system so we are the trailblazers!

OVERALL

I would definitely do MayaQuest or something similar again through MECC since it was very well run with over 40,000 schools world-wide participating. It made the Maya and Archeology very real and interesting to my students. The support materials and lesson plan ideas were excellent and the follow up materials (Spanish-English CD simulation) look like dynamite!

¡Pedales arriba! Pedals up!

Contributor

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    jumpmayaquest
e-mail to:
    MayaQuest@mecc.com or
    Informns.k12.mn.us
tel: (800) 919-MAYA

MayaQuest is sponsored by MECC, Prodigy, Informns, Target, TIES, and others.

MayaQuest II begins in Spring of 1996.

CITY NET: TRAVEL THE WORLD FROM YOUR DESKTOP

Context

This activity can be done with any age and language level as most of the sources used offer information in both English and the target language.

Description

Travel to your favorite countries and visit parks, monuments, universities, and just about anywhere else of interest. Do you enjoy Antarctica, the Caribbean, or the Middle East? It's all in one place called City Net. Are you planning a trip abroad for your students? You will find everything from pictures of your favorite monument to information in the target language on the natural resources and art in your preferred country. Traveling the world from your desktop is a quick and informative way for getting your students in touch with the world outside of their hometown. It may provide them with a broader perspective of the world and interest them in traveling to know first–hand how others live. City Net is a great motivator.

Use an Internet browsing program on a networked computer. If you have a Mac or PC with Windows I recommend Netscape. Go to the following location by selecting the file menu *open location* option. Then type:

http://www.city.net

Once there you can select the continent of your choice by clicking on the hypertext (a highlighted word or symbol which is linked to related documents). Work your way through by selecting the country and city to which you would like to travel. Netscape also allows you to print and save the information found. If you are working on a particular country or would like to return there, you may choose to save the site for that country as a bookmark. In doing so you can go right to it the next time without having to navigate repeatedly to the same spot.

Through these adventures your students are able to familiarize themselves with a variety of aspects of the countries chosen. For example if you teach French, you may select to visit Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to colorful maps of the city and it's surroundings, you can get information on sports, holidays, and social activities, just to name a few.

How should you have your students handle this information? Perhaps assign them to be travel agents and clients. They would put together a travel package that would suit the interests of the clients. In this Swiss location you can even get contact numbers for airlines and hotel information. Have students call or fax for information; there are local numbers for some of the airlines in your phone book.

Try to make the imaginary trip planning as real as possible. Ask your students to consult with a travel agent or their parents to be sure they gather all the information that one would want when planning a trip abroad. Consider having students fill out passport forms, which you can acquire from your post office.

Evaluation

Depending on the guidelines you set with your students, your method of evaluation will develop. Keep in mind that some activities, such as the travel agent one suggested, call for cooperative/collaborative efforts. Students should be rewarded for their responsibility to the group as well as the final product presented. If you are doing a series of imaginary travel experiences to allow students to know a variety of countries, you may consider having students create a photo album or scrape book of their world travels throughout the course of the year.

Contributor

Lauren Rosen assists university instructors in the uses of technology in their curriculum. Previously she was a secondary Spanish instructor for four years. She completed her Master of Education at the Univeristy of Minnesota in Teaching of Second Languages and Cultures with an emphasis in technology.

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METRO YOUR WAY AROUND!

Context

Visit the major cities of the world via metro and learn where to go and how to get there from your favorite part of the city. Recommended for 1st- through 3rd-year language learning in upper elementary, secondary, or higher education environments.

Description

The purpose is to familiarize students with metro travel throughout the world. In addition, students will become acquainted with many of the important locations within the city they travel and their proximity/accessability via metro. Instructions for traveling are in French or English. Despite the desire to provide all instruction in the target language, non–French speakers should keep in mind that culture can be taught in any language and ought to be an integral part of language learning.

Use an Internet browsing program on a networked computer such as Netscape or Lynx. Open the following location (URL):
Netscape users: *http://metro.jussieu.fr:10001*
Lynx users: *http://metro.jussieu.fr:10000*

This online activity allows the traveler to pick departure and arrival stops on the metro system in the city of their choice. If you don't know the names of the stops, select from a list or look at the map. The program calculates the approximate duration of the trip, lists all the lines taken and the stations passed.

So what do you do with this information? Have students report back the computed route and the monuments they stopped to visit on the way. For example, if you are traveling in Berlin, you may choose to leave from the Charlottenhof metro stop and travel to the Rosenthaler Platz station. The calculated route determines that it takes approximately 50 minutes. It lists lines taken and stops passed. Included on this particular journey are Charlottenburg Palace/Egyptian Museum, Grunewald for those who would like to see the forest, and the Zoo.

Assign students different journeys within a city. Do a journal writing on an imaginary trip or build a travel portfolio by visiting several cities. Have students create a travel brochure of cool things to see and do in a particular city and what metro stops are near by. This may lead into a mini–research project. The possibilities are endless.

Use the metro ride combined with City Net (see previous article) as a springboard for activities that will incorporate language and culture. Although it only takes a few minutes to find metro routing information, this may lead to a project taking up to a month depending on how extensively you incorporate the imaginary trip into your curriculum.

Evaluation

Base your assessment on the guidelines you want to give your students for their city tour. Assess how students utilize the information according to the guidelines you create rather than their ability to print out a list. If you have students working in pairs or small groups consider their individual efforts as well.

It is important to take these explorations and add context and real life situations. Outside of an expensive plane ticket, the Internet is the next best thing to being there with its graphics and descriptive information.

Contributor

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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: USING INTERNET RESOURCES IN A PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION FOR STUDY OR WORK ABROAD

Context

The activities described below have been carried out by students with at least two years of college-level German; all of them had access to a networked computer.

Description

Each spring term I teach a pre-departure orientation seminar for students who will be working or studying in Germany. The course provides general orientation, technical as well as cultural information, and opportunities for simulation. The aim of this course is to prepare students better for a stay abroad through classroom activities and Internet technologies: World Wide Web (WWW), e-mail, newsgroups, and Gopher.

As soon as students have their work assignment or know where they will be studying they start searching. They retrieve facts about the university or company, find city maps, time tables, etc. A wealth of information on Germany can be retrieved through:

soc.culture.german

Frequently Asked Questions (posted monthly) URL:

gopher://jupiter.sun.csd.unb.ca:70/00/FAQ/soc/news.answer.00526

This service gives answers to (almost) everything you ever wanted to know about Germany, from phones, trains, news etc. to money, schools and soccer. It should be on the Web now as:

http://www.cs.chalmers.se/pub/users/martiniw/www/scg-faq.html#8.1

My favorite is "The Webfoot's Guide to Germany":

http://www.webfoot.com/travel/guides/germany/germany.html

Useful are also:

http://www.leo.org/demap/

Leo (link everything online) offers good maps and down-to-earth information such as "Young People's Guide to Munich":

http://www.germany.eu.net/

To get information about a specific city, type:

http://www.city.net

Examples of activities:

1. One of the students will be working in Eichenau near Munich. To get information through one of the browsers click Munich on the hypertext and work your way through to find what you want. If you need transportation from the airport, click the appropriate stations for starting point and destination. You can also get information on the types of tickets needed, cost, or traveling time.
2. A student assigned to the University of Hanover found this page: "Welcome to the University of Hanover!" The search gave the student useful information on departments, the library, and student organizations. However, in order to get more details, knowledge of German was absolutely necessary.

3. A student who will be working at the University of Chemnitz read: "Welcome to Chemnitz! For our foreign visitors: Please note, that most of the available documents are written in German."

4. For the university in Essen this information was found: "Willkommen im WWW-Infoservice Dies ist die Startseite des World-Wide-Web-Infoservice (WWW) der Universitaet Gesamthochschule Essen. Dieser Online-Informationsdienst ist Teil eines weltweiten Informationssystems und — obwohl primaer an Angehoerige der Universitaet gerichtet — international ueber das Internet zugreifbar. Daher hier ein Hinweis fuer alle, die der deutschen Sprache nicht maechtig sind:

   A short note in English:

   Welcome! This is the home page of the World Wide Web info service provided by the University of Essen, Germany. The rest of this document — and many other documents located at (or near) this WWW node — is written in German."

   Almost all searches pointed out that although many texts are available in English, students often could find the requested detailed information only by following German routes.

5. Current events: Students should know what is going on in Germany. Newspapers are found at:

   http://www.germany.eu.net/nda/spiegel/
   http://lang-lab.uta.edu/langpages/Germany.html

   television programs (Deutsche Welle)
   http://www-dw.gmd.de/

SUMMARY

Students used the Internet to retrieve general information on Germany, to get in touch with their employers, and to contact German students who promised to help them find housing etc. They found information on transportation, leisure time activities, entertainment, and sports. One student proudly presented the menu from the Mensa, the student cafeteria.

LIMITATIONS

There is not much information yet on companies (one manager told me that they are not on the Internet because they are afraid of industrial espionage); this is also true for some research institutes. Not every city or university is hooked up.

Evaluation

One of the benefits of this approach is linking technology with a language class. I am an experienced teacher of German but I am only beginning to take advantage of the informational resources and the computer literacy of our students who taught me a great deal about networking. On the other hand, students in my pre-departure orientation learned to apply computer skills outside their field of specialization and thereby widened their horizons. Students were motivated to get the utmost out of this seminar. It was almost like a competition on who could find the most valuable information. All students were very eager to share their findings and give advice. The enormous amount of useful information compiled gave them a great sense of accomplishment.

Sensitizing students to the new environment before they are exposed to it has proved to be of great value. Knowing how to get from the airport to the university dormitory or downtown after a long overseas flight will certainly minimize culture shock for the tired traveler. Online chats with students in Germany often lead to friendships that build a support system away from home. All in all, establishing a virtual connection to Germany is the next best thing to being there.

Contributor

Prof. Weinmann is an Associate Professor of Language and Literature in the Department of Humanities at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. She has arranged exchanges for over 200 students.

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ENHANCING A WEATHER LESSON: USING THE WORLD WIDE WEB IN K-12 LANGUAGE CLASSES

Context

The following class activity is designed for use in a foreign language class when learning how to talk about the weather. It is appropriate for grades 7 through 12. With some adaptation, it can be used by younger children as well.

Description

The Internet can be a confusing place for children (or adults) to explore. This activity allows foreign language pupils to gain experience in accessing simple information from the Internet and immediately using that in a language learning activity. More specifically, it enhances the lesson on weather which is commonly taught in foreign language classrooms by allowing students to find (and immediately use) current international weather reports on the World Wide Web.

One or two class periods may be used to creat the weather bulletin board described below. Following that, access to a computer should be scheduled on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

PRE-TELECOMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

1. Teach students some expressions about the weather in the target language. This is a sample list for a beginning level German class:

Es ist sonnig.	It is sunny.
Es ist bewolkt.	It is cloudy.
Es ist windig.	It is windy.
Es ist heiss.	It is hot.
Es ist warm.	It is warm.
Es ist kuhl.	It is cool.
Es ist kalt.	It is cold.
Es regnet.	It's raining.
Es schneit.	It's snowing.
Es donnert.	It's thundering.
Es blitzt.	It's lightening.

2. With a list of weather expressions in the target language and a set of construction paper for cutting out shapes of the sun, clouds, rain, wind, thunder, lightening, and snow for each city being monitored a bulletin board is designed by the class as the focus point for the weather lesson. Note: weather images can also be cut out of magazines. Create the bulletin board with the map of Europe (or whichever country you are interested in) at the center.

   Decorate it with a border of weather condition images and some foreign language expressions that the students have learned. Decide if the weather will be monitored on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Save the cut-out images for use after the telecommunications sessions.

3. Teach, and have students practice, the mathematical formulas for converting Fahrenheit and Centigrade temperatures:

   C= 5(F–32) then divide by 9
   F= 9(C) then divide by 5 and add 32

   Have them guess the Celsius temperatures in the chosen cities.

4. Mark the cities you will monitor on the map (the teacher should look through the available cities on the Weather Machine beforehand), and have students guess the temperatures in Fahrenheit and then convert them into Celsius.

GOING ONLINE

(International weather information can be found in many Internet locations; this activity uses one particular World Wide Web site)

Students will access international weather by following these steps: (steps can be divided among three students)

First student:

- turns on the computer, goes to the communications software, and logs-on to the World Wide Web.

Second student:

- accesses the World Wide Web page by typing:
  http://life.anu.edu.au/weather.html
  goes "other weather information services", then "Weather Machine (U.Illinois)", then "International", then "Foreign Temp and Weather".

Third student:

- locates more cities which will be monitored (Berlin, Bonn, Frankfurt, Munich) and then records the date, time, weather condition, and Fahrenheit and Celsius temperatures

Since one purpose of this activity is to use telecommunications to obtain information, the teacher should ensure that over time every student has had an opportunity for a hands-on experience with the Web.

AFTER THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SESSION

Another student reports the information to the class in the target language:

- The class writes the information in their notebooks.
- The Fahrenheit temperatue can be kept secret until the class figures it out using the conversion formula. Then this student can verify their answers.
- Students discover how accurate their original predictions Celsius were.

Another set of students:

- Records information on the bulletin board by either writing it on a piece of paper which is placed next to each city or by tacking up expressions which are written on strips of paper.
- Tacks up the correct weather cut-outs next to each city.

Evaluation

After participating in this activity students will be able to locate several major cities on a map of Europe compare and contrast the weather in foreign countries, convert Centigrade into Fahrenheit and vice versa, discuss the weather in the target language and use telecommunications to locate information.

The teacher may choose to quiz the students by having them locate the chosen cities on a map, then write a sentence describing the weather for each city in the target language, and provide an approximate temperature in both Celsius and Fahrenheit (requiring the use of the conversion formula) for each of the monitored cities. Students can be asked to demonstrate their ability to access the "Weather Machine" on their own.

Obviously, this is an activity which could be carried in large part, or even completely, without telecommunications (for example, by consulting a newspaper). Integration of telecommunications can serve the purpose of enhancing student motivation and teaching the students important new learning skills. The students who are today getting weather reports from the Web may tomorrow be downloading target language film reviews, news reports, or cultural articles.

Contributor

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MAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY REAL VIA THE WWW GLOBAL VILLAGE

Context

The CVaNet Global Village uses the linguistic community concept to organize and facilitate K–16(+) student, teacher and community access to the *best* of the WWW foreign language sites. The prototype Global Village French Quarter, already acclaimed with a mirror site in Paris, is described in detail below. The Spanish Barrio is next, with the German, Russian, Japanese and Chinese communities soon to follow.

Description

(From the French Quarter English version Welcome Center guidelines:)

> Here you will find, grouped in the various locations one might visit in a French village, collections of the best Web sites of interest to the French-speaking peoples, to students and teachers of French, to artists, businessmen and young people (of any age!), in short, to all those who love the French, France and the Francophone world..."
>
> Click on the highlighted French Quarter location to jump directly to that area:
>
> Office de Tourisme: / The Tourist Office, where you can plan your next trip to France or other Francophone countries and/or find detailed geographic and cultural information on French and Francophone regions and major cities.
>
> Musees et Expositions Virtuelles: / The Museums and Exposition Center where you can enjoy virtual exhibits and favorite works of art.
>
> Forum (Conferences et Ressources des Profs): / The Teachers' Forum and Resource Center, where French teachers may participate in pedagogical conference and discussion groups, find current events up-dates, French teacher lists, the AATF Gopher site, all the major French language Web sites, as well as American university foreign language departmental home pages.
>
> Bibliotheques / Ressources: / The Library Resource Center with literary and general encyclopedic resources for everyone. This area is constantly expanding as these easily accessed authentic Web sites facilitate and encourage student cross-disciplinary research for contributions to their other areas of study.
>
> Kiosque des Journaux, Zines et NetNews: / The News-stand with French Language newspapers, magazines and newsgroups where you may obtain subscription information, daily news, magazine feature articles, newsgroup discussions and Minitel access.
>
> Cafe Electronique / Club des Jeunes (au coeur): / The Electronic Cafe where the Young and the "Young at heart" may meet to discuss the world's affairs and their own, seek e-mail correspondants and live chat groups, exchange school and personal home page sites and/or simply "lurk" in French university and grad student discussion groups.
>
> Maison des Medias A-V: The Media Center where you'll find Television, Radio, Music and Cinema programs, clips and review — sometimes a bit slow to load but next best to being there!
>
> Terrain des Sports / Parc d'attractions / Jeux: / The Athletic Field and Amusement Park where you'll find Sports sites and virtual games.
>
> Ecole Primaire: The Elementary School where children (or the child in you) will discover favorite children's stories, movies, comic-strips, games, toys, museums, visits to other countries and meetings with other children on the Internet.

Ecole de la Language Francaise: / The French Language School where you can brush up on your French with interactive French lessons and find French-English dictionaries, letter and thesis-writing tips and even lists of current French slang!

Ecole de Commerce International: / The International Business School for all those interested in participating in the GLOBAL MARKETPLACE. Here you'll have access to the European Market data bases, French businesses on the Internet, the French Ministry of Industry, the French Socio-political data bank and French university International Business School Web sites.

Guides aux Emplois pedagogiques du Quartier Francais: /The Instructional Uses of the French Quarter Guide where suggestions and links to Internet Guide sites are added as they become available.

Evaluation

The Global Village format was deliberately chosen and planned as an adventure in discovering the foreign linguistic "communities." One can explore as far, wide and deep as one's interest and imagination can stretch. For those needing a guide, stars indicate the most frequently traveled paths, exciting new links are marked with the "New" label and fun sites for the young have smilies : -) .

Instructionally, therefore, the discovery, exploration, fun and serious research possibilities of the French Quarter Web sites are endless. Beginning students, for example, can locate authentic up-to-date resources to supplement their basic Paris, hotel, restaurant, metro and train units. Intermediate students can tour Francophone cities and regions and visit museums. Advanced students can compliment studies in other subject areas by visiting French centers of research such as the Pasteur Institute where they might compare French AIDS research with American efforts.

Most students will become motivated to browse and explore far beyond the text units, having truly found a self-directed way to achieve one of their primary goals in choosing French — direct access in and to the French civilization and peoples — thus finding reason to develop further their cross-cultural awareness and French language communication skills. In subsequent years, deeper and more serious academic study of the riches of the French language cultural heritage is equally facilitated with the same point and click access.

Seasoned Web surfers quickly learn to collect "Bookmarks" of their favorite "Hot Spots" and, in like manner, French professors and students may save favored, particularly relevant sites for their own research or for assigned student projects. Pictures and sound are exciting and readily available with Netscape's latest releases but they are very slow to load. Check with your Multi-Media Resource people about the special larger disks you may use for downloading and saving the Web A-V sites of particular interest to your instructional purposes. Certainly skilled bibliophiles would find a good university library to be equally valuable for much of this research, but smaller localities and K–12 schools do not have the funds to provide the instantly available and totally authentic supplementary materials needed to motivate today's media-wise students.

Contributor

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http://www.urich.edu/~jpaulsen/home.html

GLOBAL VILLAGE WWW sites in US:
http://www.urich.edu/~jpaulsen/cvanetgv.html
http://freenet.vcu.edu/education/cvanetgv/cvanetgv.html

Global Village FRENCH QUARTER WWW sites in US:
http://www.urich.edu/~jpaulsen/gvfrench.html
http://freenet.vcu.edu/education/cvanetgv/CVaNetGVFrench.html

YAHOO! INFORMATION-GATHERING ACTIVITY AND COMPOSITION

Context

This learner-centered activity was for an intermediate-level ESL composition class at the Intensive English Institute (IEI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Since most of the students in class had the goal of attending a U.S. university in the future, this activity served as an example of how to find university information on the World Wide Web (WWW), such as admissions requirements and addresses, and also other information of interest to the students.

Description

During Spring semester 1995, I held my composition class once a week in the IEI's LinguaCenter computer lab, which is equipped with 20 networked Macintosh computers. Each week I devised a different computer-based activity that could be incorporated into our current composition schedule. Early activities in the semester included using a typing tutor, a word processing program, e-mail including the use of the "talk" function, and finally activities utilizing the WWW.

Some of my students had experience using computers before, while some did not. All of the students were new to the WWW and to using Netscape. This was the first activity we did using Netscape and more specifically using Yahoo, a WWW search engine (*http://www.yahoo.com/*).

Yahoo's design is based around an index of topics in the form of links to different locations on the WWW. Topics include Business, Education, and Entertainment, to name a few. You can click on any topic of interest to you, and then you can see sub-menus to find more specific information. There were two parts to this activity.

Part 1 was an information gathering activity we did during a 50- minute class period. I gave each student Handout 1 which included step-by-step instructions about how to begin their WWW explorations. This included how to get to Yahoo on our computer network, as well as a detailed example exploration of how to find information about the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). We went through the handout together in class. At that time, to find the UIUC from Yahoo you just clicked on the following links: Education, Universities, United States, Index — American Universities, and then University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At that destination there was the UIUC's homepage with information about different academic departments, how to apply to the UIUC, and other information about computers, the campus, faculty, and students.

After that specific example, the students were on their own to explore. Their task was to find three pieces of information that were of interest to them, and to take notes on the handout. They could write three points about one university, for example, or they could take notes about three different locations they found through Yahoo. They were told that they would need their notes to incorporate into Part 2 of the activity, the Yahoo Paragraph assignment described in Handout 2.

At this point I circulated around the lab addressing questions and looking to see how the students were doing and what they were finding. The majority of the students chose to take notes about different university programs around the U.S., so the assignment was particularly useful in that regard. Besides interest in universities, there was also great interest for my students to find information about their home countries, which you can also locate via Yahoo. The other topics that resulted from this activity included fractal images, information about Ethiopia, alcoholic drink recipes, and fashion design. Students found text, pictures, and one even found a video. This expands the possibilities for writing topics since students are not limited to text only.

The Yahoo Paragraph, which was the follow up assignment given to the students the next day, served as a review of previous work on paragraph organization, specifically the use of signal words (first, second, third, etc.) and the organization of supporting sentences. The level of specificity and topic choice was what varied the most out of this activity. There were some general paragraphs that tell about three different things that students found on Yahoo, while there were also paragraphs that focused on three different universities, three aspects of one university, or three aspects of one particular graduate program.

EVALUATION:

Some students did not have much difficulty with the activity, while there were a few who had problems. For this activity to work and address the different levels of computer knowledge of students, it is imperative that the instructor circulates around and offers help and suggestions to the students. The instructor should be well informed about Yahoo prior to doing the activity and should have a couple of "backup" examples to give to students if they're having trouble. I would recommend having a follow-up handout with at least three other pre-planned examples like the one I described above about finding the UIUC.

I learned a lot more about my students and their interests and goals by doing this activity since it is completely geared to their individual interests. I could have never predicted that students would be interested in the information that they found. Since this activity was so centered on the learner's interests, it proved to be a worthwhile and interesting experience for both the students as well as the instructor.

Contributor

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Appendix

HANDOUT 1: YAHOO! WORLD-WIDE WEB EXPLORATION

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to give you a chance to collect information that is interesting to you on the World Wide Web (WWW) using the Yahoo program. You should take notes on this handout to use later in a paragraph.

Directions:

1. Enter the "Netscape" Program
2. In the "Directory" menu at the top of the screen select "Internet Directory" and click the word "Yahoo"
   - Here you will see a list of topics on the left of the screen
   - Click on a topic that you think is interesting and take notes about three things you find in your exploration. Take notes below. If you're not sure what to do, follow the example below and see what you can find about the University of Illinois:

Example: How to access the University of Illinois:

1. Click Education
2. Click Universities
3. Click on United States
4. Click on index — American Universities
5. Click on University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
6. Take notes about three things you learned about the U of I that you didn't know before.

HANDOUT 2: YAHOO! PARAGRAPH

Yesterday you gathered three pieces of information that were interesting to you on the WWW using the Yahoo program. Now it's time to use that information in a paragraph.

Purpose: To practice using signal words and to practice organizing your supporting sentences for a process paragraph. (Chapter 4)

Directions:

1. Examine your notes from yesterday, and write a topic sentence to introduce your three pieces of information. (Show me your topic sentences and your notes in class).
2. Decide how to organize your information, which will form your supporting sentences. Choose one organizational pattern: ascending order, descending order, or equal order.

3. Decide which signal words to include in your paragraph to introduce each of your three pieces of information.
4. Write a concluding sentence that ends your paragraph.

A STUDENT GENERATED LIST OF URLS

Context

This activity was for an intermediate level ESL composition class at the Intensive English Institute (IEI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). This was the second assignment in the course that utilized the World Wide Web (WWW), hence it was a review of the previous activity that used a WWW search engine, as well as an introduction to the concept of a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

Description

During Spring semester 1995, I held my composition class once a week in the IEI's LinguaCenter computer lab. Each week I devised a different computer-based activity that could be incorporated into our current composition schedule. Early activities in the semester included using a typing tutor, a word processing program, e-mail including the use of the "talk" function, and finally activities utilizing the WWW.

This activity involved Netscape, a graphical WWW browser, and more specifically a search engine. When using a search engine, you type in a keyword and the program returns a new page with a list of WWW links related to the given keyword. At that point you can follow the links and collect information about a topic of interest to you, which may be in the forms of text, pictures, and even videos.

Currently a wide variety of search engines are available on the Web. A good place to start exploring different ones is at Netscape's Internet Search Page:
http://home.netscape.com/home/Internet-search.html
There you can find a variety of different search engines as well as information about how to use them. For this assignment, we used the Infoseek engine:
http://www.infoseek.com:80/Home
Other search engines at the Internet Search Page (as of April 1995) include Carnegie Mellon's Lycos:
http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu/
and WebCrawler from the University of Washington
http://webcrawler.cs.washington.edu/WebCrawler/WebQuery.html

There were three purposes to this activity. First, the ultimate goal was to compile a class list of annotated URLs that could be used as future topics for Journal assignments. Accordingly, the first step was for the students to understand the concept of URLs, which are like addresses for locations around the World Wide Web. If students can understand the URL concept, then they can easily share information with others simply by providing a particular URL to open in Netscape. To do that, they just click the "open" button in Netscape and type the exact URL.

Second, the activity gave the students practice in paraphrasing information, which is of course a valuable activity in the composition classroom. Third, the students were introduced to the general concept of annotation, here in the electronic sense. In other words, this is an example of how you can write an annotated list of sources that is not in the form of printed text, the usual medium.

The students e-mailed the instructor the following information:

1. The name of a page/location
   For example: EX*CHANGE WWW site for ESL/EFL students
2. The URL
   For example: *http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/exchange/*
3. A brief description of what they found at that location in their own words, of no more than five sentences. For example: At EX*CHANGE you can find information about cultures all around the world as described by ESL/EFL students. You can also find out how to contribute your own articles and stories to EX*CHANGE. I found an article about how birthdays are celebrated in Germany.

I then combined all of the student's contributions into one e-mail document and then sent each of them the completed list of URL annotations. As a follow up assignment, the students could choose one URL description from the larger list to explore in Netscape and write about what they found for their next Journal assignment. The topics my students found of interest were universities, information about their home countries, a flower company, financial information, information about supermodels, travel information, and more.

With my students' permission, I posted their findings to two e-mail lists, specifically the DEIL-L, the departmental list for the Division of English as an International Language, and the IEI-L, the list for ESL students in the Intensive Language Institute, both at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This was to further emphasize the fact that they can share the information with others that they find on the WWW by providing the exact URL and a description.

Evaluation

This served as a nice follow up activity to a previous WWW exploration activity that utilized the Yahoo search engine. In that activity, the students searched by clicking on links that described different topics, instead of typing in a keyword of their own as they did in this activity. Virtually any search engine will work for this activity, hence it is not limited to just one particular search engine. I would encourage teachers to explore search engines to find one they feel comfortable with before attempting this activity.

The largest problem I encountered with this activity was that most students had trouble copying down the exact URLs. If one letter is off or missing in the URL, then Netscape will not be able to locate the page. This is similar to a phone number. If you substitute any digit in a phone number you will either reach a different person, or a disconnected number. Therefore, it is crucial that the instructor double check each URL that is submitted by the students before distributing the annotated list. Also, like any other writing assignment involving paraphrasing, there exists the possibility of plagiarism, so the instructor should be prepared for that as well.

From this assignment as well as others involving WWW exploration, I have found that my students really like to have the freedom to explore their own interests. Using a search engine in which they type in a keyword of their choice really personalized this activity. This activity served as another way to find out what topics are of interest to the other students in the class as well.

Contributor

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WHAT'S OUT THERE?: SUMMARIZING INFORMATION FROM THE WEB

Context

This activity has been used successfully with university students in Hong Kong in ESL classes, general education classes, and at the self-access language centre who are at an intermediate-to-advanced level in English. Since World Wide Web pages are now being developed in many other languages, a similar activity could be used to teach other foreign languages as well.

Description

This activity involves having students search through various home pages to find one(s) they find interesting. The students then make a oral and/or written report on the page(s) for the rest of the class. The purpose of this activity is to teach students how to navigate the Web in their second language and to gain practice in reading, writing and speaking.

The activity takes place in a computer lab or classroom with Internet connection. As a prerequisite, students should be instructed on how to use a basic Web browser such as Netscape.

Their are several variations, but the basic steps are as follows:

1. Students get into groups of two or three (activity can also be done individually). Each group searches through the Web and finds one or more pages they find interesting (the teacher can provide some pages to start off with, see Appendix)
2. Students read the page(s) and write up a written summary to send to the class' e-mail list or newsgroup. The best reports can be published in a class magazine or school newspaper (for example, to introduce or promote the Internet to fellow students) or even on the Web itself. Alternately, the groups can incorporate the information into a letter or proposal to the university suggesting that the university or department or class have its own Web page and giving suggestions/examples of what could go in it.
3. Students can also make 5–10 minute informal oral reports to the class on what they've found. Alternately, this can be expanded to a formal presentation with handouts, audio-visual aids, or even an online computer. This formal presentation can be a short promotional talk of one or a list of WWW pages, or the result of a research study on controversial issues such as pornography, gambling, or commercial activity on the Web.

In a self-access language center, the students may be introduced to the center's home page which can be linked to other language learning material. The students are then free to explore the pages relevant to language learning and try out online learning materials. Their main task is to share the experience and review of language-related pages, either electronically in the newsgroup (or Web page) of the self-access center, or on paper to be put in a suggestion box or notebook related to the Web.

Evaluation

The advantages of this activity are that (1) students are motivated to read in English, and the information is mostly authentic, update and in multimedia format; (2) students can proceed at their own pace; (3) information sharing among students is an important component; and (4) teachers can save preparation time (and course materials) as they can share resources developed by others all over the world.

Disadvantages include the fact that the information on many pages is quite shallow and that accessing pages can be very slow, especially those with lots of graphics. Often, pages cannot be accessed at all do to busy lines or technical problems. Also, students can flounder if not given guidance, especially newcomers to the Web.

The following suggestions may help counter these problems:

1. Deselect/ disable the auto-load images function to save downloading time.
2. Encourage students to have other tasks on hand when downloading information from WWW, such as word-processing or newsgroup reading.
3. Avoid the network peak hours; t is faster to access the WWW in the evening
4. Restrict the time of reading online, assigning more time for off-line reports, discussion and writing. (Online reading can be done outside of class in any case.)
5. Consider giving students, especially beginners, a list of specific sites to choose from.

Contributors

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Appendix: Recommended Language-Related Home Pages

A Word A Day, a service from the word server at *wsmith@wordsmith.org* which mails out a vocabulary word and its definition to the subscribers every day:
http://lrdc5.lrdc.pitt.edu/awad/home.html

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), with a tutorial service and a range of online writing handouts:
http://owl.trc.purdue.edu/

The Virtual Media Lab at University of Pennsylvania:
http://philae.sas.upenn.edu

Ohio University CALL Lab Page, with a range of languages and an online dictionary:
http://www.tcom.ohiou.edu/OU_Language/OU_Language.html

The Human-Languages Page (multilingual resources) at Willamette:
http://www.willamette.edu/~tjones/Language-Page.html

Dartmouth College's English Language Page — with a variety of languages, including English & common Asian & European languages:
http://grafton.dartmouth.edu:8001/lrc/lang/english.html

International E-mail Projects in ESL Curriculum — what works and what doesn't?:
http://www.cuhk.hk./eltu/ilc/Publi023.html

Global Communication Through E-mail — Helsinki University of Technology, Finland:
http://www.hut.fi/~rvilmi/e-mail-project.html

Writing Around the World — Telecommunications and English:
http://www.nyu.edu/pages/hess/cities.html

Intercultural E-mail Connections — a mailing list for teachers seeking partner teachers in institutions of Higher Education for international classroom electronic mail exchanges:
http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/

The White House:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/Whitehouse

The Humanities Server at Chinese University of Hong Kong — with links to various languages: Chinese, Japanese, French & German:
http://www.arts.cuhk.hk/

French Language Resources:
http://www.iway.fr/Internet-way/fr/html/France/France_index.html

Language Learning Resource Center at Carnegie Mellon:
http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/usr/jl9e/llrc/llrc.html

Melange Language Tutorials on Internet — commercial language lessons in Singapore, slow but with audio files in several languages:
http://merlion.singnet.com.sg/~melange/melange.html

Foreign Languages for Travellers:
http://insti.physics.sunysb.edu/~mmartin/languages/languages.html

TELNET TREASURE HUNTS: LEARNING TO READ (ON) THE INTERNET

Context

The following guidelines were used to develop a set of Internet reading exercises to assist university ESL students (with advanced English proficiency) in navigating the Internet. Although originally intended for matriculated University of Washington ESL students who had access to the Internet, the Treasure Hunts have also been adapted for lower-level non-matriculated students in our Intensive English Porgram. These students, who do not have access to their own unix accounts, were able to participate when we adapted the Hunts to begin from our University Gopher System — UWIN (telnet uwin.u.washington.edu)

Description

Telnet Treasure Hunts are a set of questions which send students on a hunt for information in the jungle of the Internet. The exercise is based on the theory that navigating the Internet will make students more aware of reading skills such as predicting content, categorizing, quessing meaning from context, and skimming and scanning for specific terms as well as chunks of relevant data. The questionnaires are developed according to a precise set of guidelines which ensure that the exercise actually leads students to consciously utilize the aforementioned skills. We have provided both guidelines for developing Internet reading activities, as well as some sample exercises in order to give teachers an idea of to how to develop their own Telnet Treasure Hunts.

The extensive reading alone required to navigate through large amounts of information on the Internet gives students unconscious reading practice. The vast quantities of information available on the Internet and the lack of an overall systematic organization of this information creates an atmosphere where students can become highly aware of the specific reading skills they are employing. By following the questions on the Treasure Hunt step by step students become more critically aware of the reading processes that will help them to get the most out of the Internet.

For example, Telnet Treasure Hunts require students to become aware of how different Internet sites present and organize information; they require that students learn to predict what would be included in the categories of their university library Gopher system or what kind of information would be available at a telnet site they found under CHAT groups in Scott Yanoff's Lists of Lists. By asking questions which fit the guidelines below, the Telnet Treasure Hunts can turn the Internet search process into a critical reading exercise of conscious trial and error leading students to develop their ability to skim and scan for information as well as their ability to determine intended audience and content through the language and form used in particular files orinformation sites.

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL TREASURE HUNTS

1. Any time the Treasure Hunt leads students to a new screen or interface format, the Treasure Hunt questions should lead students to observe and analyze that new format. (See example A in sample exercises)

2. The first Treasure Hunts need to clearly lead students through the categorization and prediction steps needed to find information on the Internet. (See example B in sample exercises)
3. After the categorization/prediction process is clear to the students and students are basically familiar with the interface system they are working in, the questions should then be constructed so that students can be confident the answers they come up with are correct. (See example C in sample exercises)
4. At the next level, questions should be progressive. One question will not be able to be complete without information gained from the previous question. (See example D in sample exercises)
5. Every Treasure Hunt should end with an exciting find — either a new source of information for papers/research or a great new piece of knowledge about how to navigate the Internet.

Evaluation

Developing the Treasure Hunts for use in our classes proved to be more difficult than developing their theoretical justification! Teachers developed Treasure Hunts which, on one end of the scale, gave students so much context that they simply needed to follow step by step instructions and fill in the blanks. The only reading skill these exercises ended up testing was comprehension of the questions' instructions! On the other end of the scale were Treasure Hunts developed with so little context that it was impossible for anyone but a mind reader to guess what kind of information was needed or where one could even begin to look for it! We were able, after much trial and error, to develop a set of guidelines which were successful in helping us create Treasure Hunts which led students to consciously use the above outlined reading skills.

Since the development of our guidelines, the Hunts have been working well. Students enjoy the problem solving and are motivated by the feeling of having learned something new everytime they finish a hunt. What we have found important though is to make sure students feel safe and comfortable completing these tasks. Navigating the Net can be frustrating. The tasks should be short enough so that all students can finish within a class hour. (Students who finish early can always go on exploring on their own.) Students should be encouraged to work together and ask their instructor questions (the instructor can then decide whether to give hints or not). Students need to be made to realize that life on the Internet is unpredictable! Sometimes things just don't work.

Finally, the Internet is constantly changing. For instructors this means that Treasure Hunts they develop must be continually updated. For students it means struggling with the concept that *where* you find something is not nearly as important as *how* you found it since it may not be there the next day! But teaching the *how* is what Telnet Treasure Hunts are all about.

Contributors

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Appendix: Sample Exercies

TELNET TREASURE HUNT I

Name________________________________

Log into your account, but DO NOT GO TO YOUR E-MAIL!!! Instead, choose the option from the menu which will allow you to go to UWIN. Once inUWIN, play around with the keyboard a bit. Watch what happens. Now answer the following questions:

EXAMPLE A questions. Task: lead students to observe and analyze the format

1. Notice the screen is divided in two.
   - What is on the left side of the screen?
   - What is on the right side of the screen?
   - How do you move from the left side of the screen to the right side?

2. What is at the top of the screen? What is the box for?

3. Notice the line of letters at the bottom of the screen.
   - What is the purpose of these letters?
   - How do you move up and down in the lists on this screen?
   - How do you access the files which each entry in the list on the right side?

EXAMPLE B questions. Task: lead students through categorization and prediction steps needed to find information on the Internet

4. Which category would you look under to find information about UW students?

EXAMPLE C questions. Task: present students with questions that have one right answer.

5. Look up the e-mail address of the person sitting next to you and write it here:

   ____

TELNET TREASURE HUNT II

Use your account to login to UWIN. Answer the following questions.

EXAMPLE B questions. Task: lead students through categorization and prediction steps needed to find information on the Internet

1. Look at the catgories in the left hand of your screen. Which general category will lead you to information about the Internet?

2. Place your cursor on this entry and look at the box at the top of the screen. What does it say? (In your own words, explain what the Internet is.)

3. Move to the right side of the screen, onto the list of Internet items.
   - In this list, which three categories will give you general information about the Internet?
   - Without entering these categories, describe in your own words what you will find in each of these three categories.

EXAMPLE C questions. Task: present students with questions that have one right answer.

4. Use the categories and explanations provided for you to find the answers to the following questions.
   - Who compiled the "List of Internet Resources?"
   - When was the list last updated?

Here we will go back to EXAMPLE B questions, because the format has changed.

5. How do you move down or up one line in this screen?

6. Look at the bottom of the screen.
   - How do you move up one page in this screen?
   - How do you move down on page?
   - How do you exit?
   - What would you use the W command for?

Back to EXAMPLE C questions which have one right answer

7. Search for the word AIDS. The first resource/entry name you get should be FDA BBS. The telnet address for this FDA BBS is telnet fdabbs.fda.gov OR telnet 150.148.8.48. Use the same method you used to find FDA BBS to find the next resource/entry name associated with AIDS.
   - What Internet resource did the computer find for you?
     ____________________________(resource/entry name)
   - What are the telnet addresses for accessing this resource?
     ____________________, ____________________.
   - Is a login name required in order to access these resources? If so, what is it?
     ____
   - What do these Internet resources offer?

TELNET TREASURE HUNT III

Start this Hunt in the List of Internet Resources by Scott Yanoff.

EXAMPLE D questions. Students must use data gained in one step to complete the next steps of the Hunt. The only way they'll know if they're correct is by their ability to complete these next steps.

1. Use the W command. Search until you find a resource that looks like it offers an interactive conversation about AIDS.
   - What is the resource/entry name for this resource?____________________
   - What are the telnet addresses for accessing this resource?______________, ______________.
   - Is there a login name required to access this resource? If yes, what is it?
2. Exit the List of Internet Resources. To access the Internet resources you have found, you must use the UNIX SHELL. To use telnet addresses, logout to your e-mail menu and enter the shell. At the prompt (i.e. homer%), type telnet and the address of the resource you wish to access.
3. As the computer accessed this resource, did you see what command will allow you to backspace and correct typos in this database (It scrolls by fast!!)? ______________
4. What is the CHAT?
5. Where was it developed?
6. What topics can you discuss in CHAT?
7. How can you access the file on AIDS?
8. Once you have accessed the AIDS database, how do you get information about AIDS?
9. How do you browse forward in this file? Backward? How do you exit?
10. Find answers the following questions:
    - Who can get AIDS?
    - How do I avoid getting AIDS?
11. Write two new things you found out about AIDS using this database.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPUTING: LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES' INFORMATION ARCADE

Context

The University of Iowa Libraries' Information Arcade (IA) is a facility that provides access to electronic source materials in the form of textual and multimedia databases, electronic library catalogs, and sources on the Internet. The IA provides a unique environment for communicative language activities to take place. The facility is divided into three major sections: an electronic classroom, information stations, and multimedia stations. Language students can access information from the information stations and the electronic classroom. They can also use the multimedia stations to assemble and develop presentations. Most of the languages studied at the University of Iowa (for example, Chinese, English, French, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish) are represented in the online activities conducted in the IA.

Graduate and undergraduate university students with different levels of second language proficiency have been involved in these activities. Also, some special instruction has been programmed for high school students and children in Special Education classes.

Description

Students in the "Technical Communication in Spanish" class and "Cultural and Communicative Skills in Spanish" class accessed Latin American Gophers and World Wide Web Servers to retrieve information about Latin American countries for their class projects. They also used interactive writing software to critique each other's writing and electronic mail to communicate among themselves, with the instructors, and with scholars and students from Latin America. They searched library catalogs from universities in Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Spain. They established telnet and FTP sessions to download images, text, sound, and QuickTime movies, and used the multimedia facilities in the IA to create bilingual presentations using presentation software. Students in the "Close Encounters Program" from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Iowa used Hypercard stacks to learn Japanese, Spanish, and French. ESL students in the Iowa Intensive English Program have also used the IA to communicate through e-mail and to access information from Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), Ohio University CALL Lab, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ESL homepage.

SPECIALIZED SOFTWARE AND COURSEWARE:

The IA maintains an extensive collection of software titles some of which are useful for language learners. Examples of electronic texts and multimedia databases held by (or accessible in) the IA are: ADMYTE (Archivo Digital de Manuscritos y Textos Espanoles), ARTFL (American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language), Mecca and Madina Islambase, Soncino Talmud, TLG (Thesaurus Lingua Graecae), Andean World, Poesia Hipanoamericana, Perseus, Images of the French Revolution, 1492 Encuentros/Encounters, The

First Emperor of China, and LIZ (Litteratura Italiana Zanichelli). There are also utilities available that allow information retrieval, display, and printing in Chinese and Japanese from the Internet.

Evaluation

Since the opening of the IA in August of 1992, teaching and learning languages at the University of Iowa has been enhanced. Teachers and students make use of online electronic resources that are available on the Internet, as well as CD-ROMs, and Hypercard stacks from the IA collection. The collection of resources continues to grow, and each year more faculty from language departments use the collection and participates in its development.

The evaluation of these activities is part of the ongoing evaluation of the resources and services of the IA. The IA keeps statistics on usage that will help in shaping the direction and goals of the facility. Since the IA opened, 29 separate language classes have been taught in the classroom, and the collection of language related electronic texts and multimedia databases has increased to over 25 titles.

Contributor

Eduardo Garcia is a Ph.D. Student in Second Language Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Iowa. He works as a graduate assistant in the Information Arcade and is currently writing his dissertation on "Computer-Assisted Instruction for Second Language Learning at the Elementary School".

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"LIMPOPO" AND "LENIN": MULTIMEDIA PROGRAMS FROM THE INTERNET FOR STUDENTS OF RUSSIAN

Context

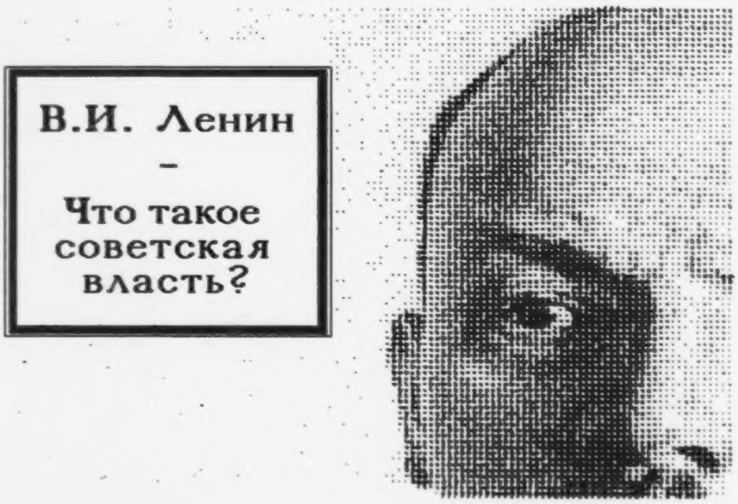
This activity is intended for university students of Russian.

Description

"Limpopo" and "Lenin: What is Soviet Power?" are multimedia software programs designed to enhance Russian-language instruction. Both programs are available for free via the Internet (see Appendix).

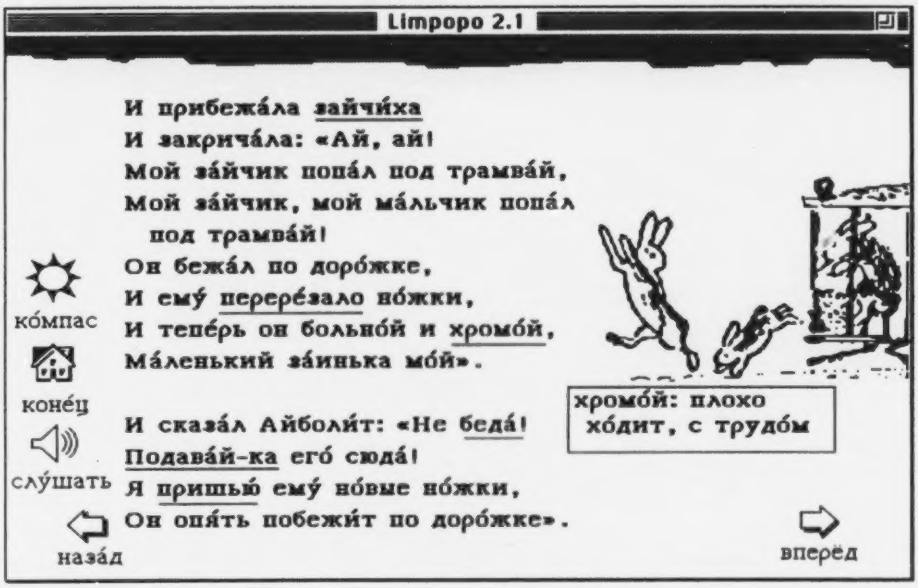
"Limpopo" introduces our students to the original text of Chukovsky's best-loved story in verse about Dr. Ai-Bolit, who travels the world helping sick animals. Students can listen to the story section by section by clicking on a loudspeaker button while enjoying the wonderful drawings by Vladimir Konashevich. "Limpopo" was designed for use in late first- or second-year Russian.

The centerpiece of the "Lenin" program is a digitized recording of Lenin himself reading his famous 1919 speech. The text of the one-minute speech is displayed on the screen and can be heard section by section or in its entirety by clicking on a loudspeaker button. "Lenin: What is Soviet Power?" was designed for use in third- or fourth-year Russian or in a content-based course on Russian history.



В.И. Ленин
–
Что такое
советская
власть?

In both programs, students can click on difficult words for pop-up glosses. Both programs also include introductory exercises to prime the students for the texts and follow-up exercises to test comprehension.

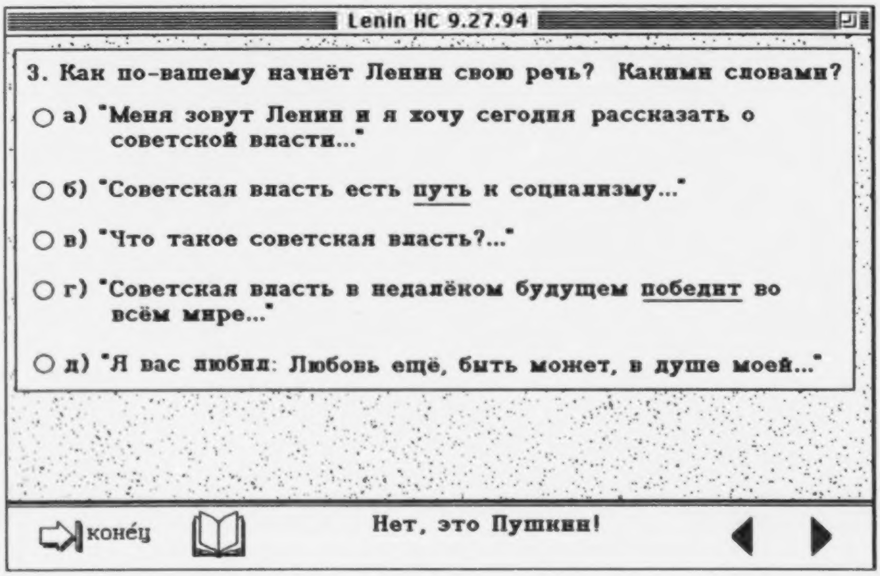


И прибежа́ла зайчи́ха
И закрича́ла: «Ай, ай!
Мой за́йчик попа́л под трамва́й,
Мой за́йчик, мой ма́льчик попа́л
под трамва́й!
Он бежа́л по доро́жке,
И ему́ перере́зало но́жки,
И тепе́рь он больно́й и хромо́й,
Ма́ленький за́инька мо́й».

И сказа́л Айболи́т: «Не беда́!
Подава́й-ка его́ сюда́!
Я пришью́ ему́ но́вые но́жки,
Он опя́ть побежи́т по доро́жке».

хромо́й: плохо
хо́дит, с трудо́м

The programs were designed to acquaint students of Russian with authentic culturally or historically significant material. The "Lenin" program is particularly aimed at students of Russian with majors in Russian Area Studies. In addition, the programs can be used to review specific areas of grammar or stylistics in a cultural context: verbs of motion and diminutive suffixes in "Limpopo", participles and the stylistics of formal oration in "Lenin".



3. Как по-вашему начнёт Ленин свою речь? Какими словами?

○ а) "Меня зовут Ленин и я хочу сегодня рассказать о советской власти..."

○ б) "Советская власть есть путь к социализму..."

○ в) "Что такое советская власть?..."

○ г) "Советская власть в недалёком будущем победит во всём мире..."

○ д) "Я вас любил: Любовь ещё, быть может, в душе моей..."

Нет, это Пушкин!

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The programs can be completed during class in a Mac-equipped language lab or assigned as homework. Each takes about one hour. Both programs can be primed in class: "Limpopo" could be primed with a short biography of Chukovsky, a brainstorming of animal terms or words connected with Africa, or a creative review of motion verbs. Students can prepare for "Lenin" by a discussion of the Russian Revolution and Lenin's role in it or by finding out what cultural associations the students have with key words which will appear in the speech: capitalism, democracy, worker, bourgeois, etc.

After completing "Limpopo", students are expected to summarize in writing and orally Dr. Ai-bolit's adventure. The instructor can check completion and comprehension by the written summary and/or by discussing the story in class: Who is Dr. Ai-bolit? What animals did he meet? Where did he go and how did he get there? Students are not expected to remember everything or memorize all the new words, but it is surprising just how much can be recalled in a group discussion.

After completing Lenin, there is a whole range of interactive follow-up activities which could be completed. These include answering questions on the content of the speech, a discussion of the connotations of the key words in the speech for Russians, or reading short articles on contemporary impressions of Lenin in Russia, etc. Further suggestions and actual materials can be obtained from David Danaher. For further questions on the pedagogical aspects of the programs, contact Snejana Tempest.

Evaluation

Both of the programs were used enthusiastically at Brown University and Middlebury College in the spring semesters of 1994 and 1995. In completing the programs, students acquired cultural and historical knowledge and improved their listening and reading skills. Some of the comments we received were

ON "LIMPOPO"

> "Having the opportunity to go at one's own pace and listen to the sound was fantastic. Hurrah! More programs like this, please."

> "The pop-up definitions were great. Usually, when reading a text on one's own, one can be lazy about looking up unknown words. But in this program there's no excuse because clicking on a word is so simple. All in all, lots of fun."

ON "LENIN"

> "I enjoyed the program a lot — it was user-friendly and fun."

> "It is definitely great to have the definitions readily available. I'm too lazy to look up all the words I don't know. The computer is the best way of studying vocab because you see the words, you hear them, and they are defined right in front of you. I like the way we get a little history out of the program."

Contributors

Snejana Tempest is Assistant Professor of Russian at Middlebury College where she integrates new methods and technologies into her daily teaching. David Danaher is Visiting Instructor of Russian at Brown University where he develops and implements new materials for language instruction. Christopher Ott is Coordinator of Technical Services in the language lab at Brown University; he enjoys developing multi-media software.

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Appendix: Accessing "Limpopo" and "Lenin: What is Soviet Power?"

The technical requirements for using the programs are:

- a Macintosh with at least 4 megabytes of RAM.
- a hard disk with at least 7 megabytes free for each program.
- System 7.0 or higher.
- the Cyrillic fonts "Eighteenth Century" and "Norwich US," which are included with the programs.

Both programs are available *for free* via the Internet:

1. Using an FTP program like "Fetch," connect anonymously to the server:
   ftp.brown.edu.
2. Once connected, go into the folder "pub," and then from there into the folder "language_lab".
3. Get the file "Limpopo_for_FTP" or "Lenin_for_FTP" and save to your hard drive. (This should take about five minutes.)
4. Once you have the file on your hard disk, double-click on its icon and it will begin to decompress. The program has been compressed into a "self-expanding archive" (.sea) in order to save space. Double-clicking will begin the decompression, which should take about 5–10 minutes, depending on the speed of your computer.

5. As asked, select a destination folder on your hard disk for the decompressed copy of the program to be saved in.
6. When decompression is finished, you will have a folder on your hard disk for the program you have just downloaded. Open it, and drag the file for the font (either "Eighteenth Century" or "Norwich US," depending on which program you are working with) to your System folder.
7. Make sure that the sound on your computer is not turned all the way down by opening the sound control panel, under the Apple menu.
8. If you only have four megabytes of RAM, it would be a good idea to close any other programs you are running. The sound files in this program require a lot of memory.
9. Double-click on the program's icon, and the program will begin!

The authors would be grateful for any comments on the programs or copies of any materials developed in conjunction with them.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB PUTS A NEW SPIN ON HOMEWORK: THE HOME PAGE WORK

Context

Third semester (intermediate) Spanish class at Santa Barbara City College, Santa Barbara, California.

Description

The World Wide Web has turned out to be one of the richest educational resources in the world. It is the ultimate encyclopedia and an excellent source of reading materials for second language learners. Some of the wonderful offerings on the Web include:

- the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*:
  http://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/~justin/jornada/index.html
- *Tecla*, a weekly text magazine for learners and teachers of Spanish:
  http://www.bbk.ac.uk/Departments/Spanish/Tecla.html
- *Caretas*, a magazine from Perú:
  http://ichu.rcp.net.pe:80/CARETAS

I wanted my students to access these so I contacted Steve Schmidhauser, the Webmaster of the Santa Barbara City College Web server, about the possiblility of using the Computer Science Lab for WWW access for my students. He said "yes" and we were on our way.To facilitate access to these WWW sites by my Spanish class students, I created a Home Page on the Santa Barbara City College Web server with links to WWW sites that I felt were useful:
http://www.sbcc.cc.ca.us/~chavez/spanish.html.
I believe that these sites on my Home Page would keep a student just as a busy as the audio tapes in a language lab. These assignments counted as part of their required language lab attendance.

I also created a Home Page that was a homework handout. This handout was like any typical handout, but it was written using the HTML markup language, which is used for creating Home Pages. Thus, this homework Home Page had hyperlinks on it. For example one of the questions on the handout was this

1. Lee en *Tecla* el artículo "Telebasura" y contesta las siguientes preguntas (read the article "Telegarbage" in *Tecla* and answer the following questions):

All my students had to do was read the questions and click on the hyperlink to continue the assignment. If the students had any doubts while at the assigned link, they could go back to homework Home Page via the browser and reread the questions.

Evaluation

The students were extremely excited about the capability of the World Wide Web. They looked forward to doing their assignments from the WWW. Those students who really wanted to expand their vocabulary used the WWW as the means of doing so.

One of the sections of my Home Page of Spanish language sites includes a literature section. Some sites put out electronic versions of Spanish language literature. There are very few. This was very advantageous for the few sites who put out electronic versions of Spanish language literature. One was a German server with Argentine information: *http://www.informatik.uni-muenchen.de/rec/argentina/*. This particular server had electronic versions of works by Argentine political satirists César Bruto and Alejandro Dolina. One of my students absolutely loved these readings. He not only expanded his vocabulary, but he learned some argentinisms.

Thus, I really see the WWW as a literature resource that can supplement foreign language text books. Instead of going to the library or a bookstore, all a student has to do is go the computer lab and browse the Web.

Contributor

Ricardo Chávez is an instructor at Santa Barbara City College. He graduated with an M.A. in Spanish from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1994. Mr. Chávez has created World Wide Web pages for the ESL and Spanish Departments at Santa Barbara City College.

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MAX AND MORITZ INVADE THE WEB: PROVIDING GERMAN LEARNING MATERIALS OVER THE INTERNET

Context

This project makes materials for learning intermediate-level German available to students over the Internet. Included are texts with graphics, audio and video files, comprehension exercises and quizzes. They can be accessed using any Web browser such as Mosaic or Netscape. This allows students to work with the materials in a self-paced mode in our computer lab or at home on their own computers.

Description

Our intermediate-level German classes involve the following elements: short readings, vocabulary development, grammar review, introduction of more advanced grammar concepts, practice in speaking, writing and listening comprehension. At the end of the third semester course, students should have a knowledge of the fundamental structure of the language and be able to apply that knowledge in basic communicative situations. The long-range goal of this project is to provide through the Internet as comprehensive a set of learning materials as possible to achieve these goals. Presently, the materials support student work in the areas of reading, vocabulary development and listening comprehension.

Several of the readings are electronic versions of German children's stories. I have found that these texts, due to their target audience, present fairly simple vocabulary and structure and are therefore adaptable to beginning and intermediate language learners. I have chosen stories whenever possible which include illustrations. To present the stories, I scanned both text and images. The scanned text was processed with OCR software and the images were made into graphics files of the GIF type. The text was then edited to conform to the authoring language of the WWW, HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). This involves adding "tags" to the text such as <p> for paragraph. References to the images were also added to the text so that when displayed the text accompanies the original illustration. By making the GIF images "transparent", the background of the images blends with that of the Web page, simulating the look of a printed page.

For several of the stories, I recorded native speakers reading the text. The files were then linked to the text/images pages with an icon representing a pair of headphones. One such icon accompanies each block of text. When a user clicks on the icon, the audio file is sent, an audio "helper application" is called up automatically and the selection is played. Since the audio is downloaded (temporally) to the user's computer, the file can be played repeatedly, and can also be saved. This same method was used with short video versions of some of the stories. In this case, an icon representing a TV accompanies the text block. Handling of the digital video clips parallels that of the audio passages.

To aid in the student's comprehension of the text, words or phrases which are likely to be unfamiliar to an intermediate-level learner are glossed; the existence of a gloss is indicated through the usual Web convention of the word being in blue and underlined. Clicking on such a "hot" word takes the student to that item in an appended glossary specific to that story.

Several kinds of comprehension exercises are available to students to test their understanding of the text, and provide them with an opportunity to make comments on the texts. One such item uses a "clickable graphic" through which students respond to a question by clicking on the appropriate part of an image, thus identifying specific vocabulary or answering a content question. The answer is processed and the student is given feedback (either in text format or audio) on the correctness of the response. Another set of questions are short answer fill-ins, which again are automatically evaluated, providing feedback to the student. A third set offers the student the opportunity to enter comments about the story. These comments are collected and hypertext links in the original document are generated which indicate the presence of linked documents.

Evaluation

The goal in setting up this kind of learning environment is to allow students the opportunity to gain a basic understanding and familiarity with both the readings and the vocabulary outside of class, as well as to allow opportunities for student-to-student interaction with the texts. The fact that the materials are available over the Internet allows remote access at a time convenient to the student. Given the large number of working students at VCU, this is an important service to provide. The Web is a popular phenomenon and one increasingly familiar to students, so that the hypertext conventions used in presenting the texts are familiar enough to students to make more than a rudimentary orientation unnecessary.

Presenting language materials in this way has a positive effect on classroom sessions as well. Giving the students enough help in understanding the texts before class discussions frees up class time from textual explanations for more substantive, communicative activities.

Contributor

Bob Godwin-Jones is Professor and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the creator and administrator of the "VCU Trail Guide to International Sites and Language Resources" (*http://www.fln.vcu.edu*).

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The materials described are available through the following URL:
http://www.fln.vcu.edu/gj/201/201.html.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE HOME PAGE

Context

The English as a Second Language Home Page can be used by any ESL students or teachers with access to the World Wide Web.

Description

The English as a Second Language Home Page is designed to organize and encourage the creation of ESL learning resources on the World Wide Web. It is intended to be a starting point for ESL students who want to learn English on the Web. The home page consists of four sections: (1) Listening and Speaking, (2) Reading, (3) Writing, and (4) ESL-Related Information.

The first sections provides links to listening and speaking materials designed for ESL students, English for travelers, and quick-time movies. By pointing and clicking, students can hear how a sentence or a word is pronounced by a native speaker. This can be especially important for ESL students who due to the inconsistencies of English spelling often misguess how a word is pronouced.

The Reading section provides connections to online electronic magazines including several children's magazines. The Writing section includes an online Writing Lab, some sample English letters, and miscellaneous writing resources.

In the section of ESL-related information, students can access the home pages of nearly all the major universities in the U.S. as well as information on how to apply to American colleges and universities. There is also a section called ESL Teachers' Corner, in which teachers can learn how to write HTML documents, learn how to create digitized sound with SoundMachine, or even conduct a search for ESL jobs.

Finally, there is an online form which students can use to send comments and suggestions via e-mail directly to the ESL Home Page developer.

Evaluation

The ESL home page has been heavily accessed. The March statistics showed that daily file transfer was 435, with accesses coming from more than forty countries. Among the four sections, Listening and Speaking was accessed most. This HTML file was downloaded 1,150 times while Reading was 565, Writing was 526, and ESL Related Information was 671.

The objective of designing this home page was to promote the use of the Web for ESL learning. While many of the activities on this page could be carried out in stand-alone fashion, linking them together creates autonomous learning opportunities for students and facilitates cooperative efforts by teachers in the development and sharing of materials.

Contributor

Rongchang Li is a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His main research interest is computer-assisted language learning, with a focus on educational uses of the World Wide Web.

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DESIGNING EXERCISES AND TESTS ON THE WEB

Context

Language teachers at Hong Kong Polytechnic University can now design tests, exercises, surveys, and questionnaires on the World Wide Web which consist of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. This procedure can be adapted at other institutions as well.

Description

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is the largest university in Hong Kong in terms of student number. A typical degree course has an enrollment of between 40 and 80. Courses with over 200 attendees are common. This poses a loading issue to the teachers concerned especially in administering tutorials and assessments. To alleviate teachers from marking piles of test or examination scripts, an HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) form and an associated CGI (Common Gateway Interface) script were designed. This was a logical extension to some previous successful applications of the Web to disseminate course notes to students. An added incentive to develop this set of tools was that e-mail has been widely used as a communication tool among students and between staff and students.

A fill-out form in WWW is simply a Web page but with input items for the users to fill in. These items can be (1) radio buttons, (2) check boxes, (3) scrollable list, and (4) blanks. The first three items are pre-defined by the programmer and a list will be provided for the users to choose from. The last item allows the users to enter text or numerical strings.

An associated CGI script is required to process the form. Typically, this form is often written in a script language called Perl. Although it requires some programming effort to write the script, the form introduced in this paper can be universally applicable to virtually all tests once one is written as the script will read the variables and their values from the form directly. This is important in that variables are defined in the form rather than the script thereby giving more flexibility to the teachers since designing a form is much simpler than writing a script.

The mechanism of the assessment process includes several steps. First, a form is designed and put into a Web server. Students then access the form and do the test by filling out the form and then click the "Submit" key inside the form. Third, the Web server will accept the input from the user and send it to the script for processing. The script will decode the input string from the Web server into individual variable and value pairs according to the variables as defined in the form. Lastly, the variables will be stripped off from the pairs leaving the values which will then be re-directed and appended to an output file in a pre-defined order and delimited by a special character (~). Each student's answers will occupy one line in this file. By using a delimited style, non-answered questions can still be processed.

The delimited text file can then be imported into a spreadsheet and the imported file will become a matrix with each column holding one question's answer and each row a student's record. For multiple choice questions, a simple function can be built into the spreadsheet to mark the answers against the model answer. For fill-in-the-blank questions, if the teacher decides that exact spelling is required then the above function can be applied; if discretion has to be exercised as there can be variations to the answers, then the teacher has to check the contents of the appropriate cells in the spreadsheet and decide on how much mark to give to the answers. Finally, if the teacher has his/her own homepage in the Web server, the process can be simplified as much of the work can be handled by the teacher concerned.

Evaluation

The major advantage of this script is that it saves a lot of time required for printing, distributing, collecting and marking test papers. Further, any errors can be modified without having to re-print the test papers. The mechanism described in this paper will deliver the answers in a delimited form to the teacher via e-mail. The answers can then be imported into a spreadsheet program in which marking and grading will be done automatically. It also allows teachers to exercise discretion in grading fill-in-the-blank answers. Security can be maintained in the Web server by setting up a system whereby the test questions are only accessible during the test.

The major shortcoming of this script is its lack of real-time feedback to students. It only replaces the traditional hard-copy test paper by electronic forms. An ideal solution is that it requires students to attempt the same question until the correct answer is given (for multiple choice) or until a request is made (for fill-in-the-blank questions). Further, random selection of questions from a pool of pre-set questions cannot be done yet. Lastly, the security measure is still primitive though the teacher can change the access privilege of users from time to time by altering the contents of the security locks.

Development and research is being undertaken to enhance the script. This includes a more straight-forward mechanism to transfer the answers, the possibility of enabling a semi-automatic process of random selection of questions, and security measures.

Over time, we believe that this system will be quite beneficial, not only for teachers with large classes, but also in team teaching, distance learning, and research situations where it is necessary to test or question students who are spread out over different geographical locations.

Contributors

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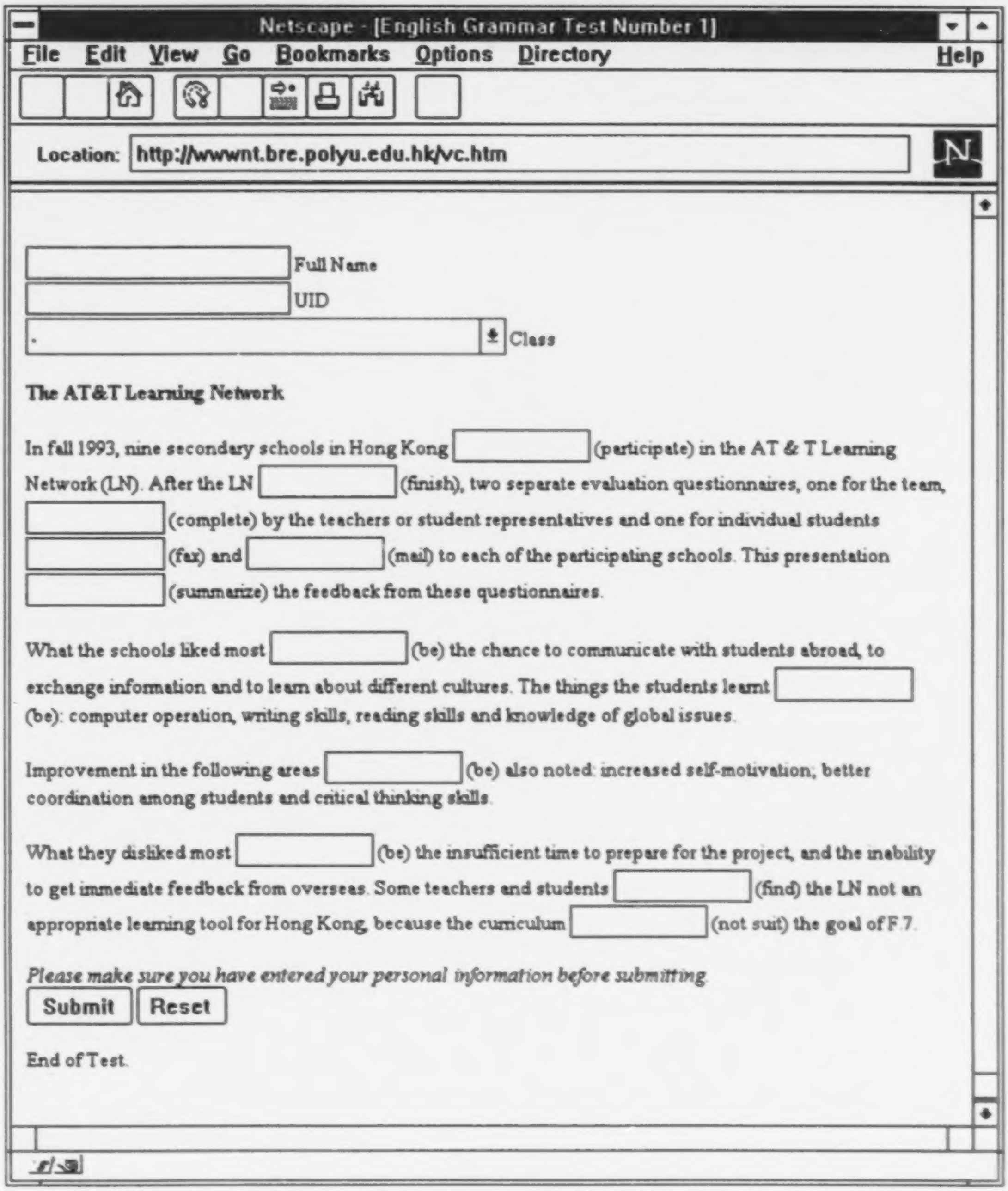
Appendix A Language Test on the Web



Location: http://wwwnt.bre.polyu.edu.hk/vc.htm

______ Full Name

______ UID

______ Class

The AT&T Learning Network

In fall 1993, nine secondary schools in Hong Kong ______ (participate) in the AT & T Learning Network (LN). After the LN ______ (finish), two separate evaluation questionnaires, one for the team, ______ (complete) by the teachers or student representatives and one for individual students ______ (fax) and ______ (mail) to each of the participating schools. This presentation ______ (summarize) the feedback from these questionnaires.

What the schools liked most ______ (be) the chance to communicate with students abroad, to exchange information and to learn about different cultures. The things the students learnt ______ (be): computer operation, writing skills, reading skills and knowledge of global issues.

Improvement in the following areas ______ (be) also noted: increased self-motivation; better coordination among students and critical thinking skills.

What they disliked most ______ (be) the insufficient time to prepare for the project, and the inability to get immediate feedback from overseas. Some teachers and students ______ (find) the LN not an appropriate learning tool for Hong Kong, because the curriculum ______ (not suit) the goal of F.7.

Please make sure you have entered your personal information before submitting.

End of Test.

DÉCOUVRIR BERKELEY: STUDENTS' REPRESENTATION OF THEIR WORLD ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Context

Second semester (elementary) French class at the University of California, Berkeley.

Description

In the spring semester of 1994 my students were corresponding with e-mail partners in France, many of whom had never heard of Berkeley. My students wanted to do more than just describe what Berkeley was like in their e-mail messages: they wanted to *show* their French penpals the sights and sounds of Berkeley so they could have a sense of what it was like to be a student there. Since the World Wide Web (WWW) was coming into vogue at that time, I suggested that my students develop a WWW multimedia document that would allow their French penpals, as well as others throughout the French-speaking world, to see what Berkeley was like, through their eyes.

Our first task was to decide what to include in this WWW document. My students brainstormed about all the possible aspects of their lives that could be portrayed, and then collectively narrowed the list down to the following: (1) general information about the Berkeley campus—its location, description of programs, student body, and so forth; (2) the Campanile—the campus bell tower; (3) Telegraph Avenue—cafés, boutiques and street vendors; (4) the Underground—a student arcade; (5) Sproul Plaza at noon; (6) dorm life; (7) fraternities and sororities; and (8) language classes.

The class divided up into teams to work on each of these areas. Each team had to decide how the divide up the informational load for their topic: what should be represented in text? in video? in sound? Given the need for conciseness, students had to decide what was essential and what was peripheral to their particular topic. They also needed to think about how to represent their topic to their French peers. This was particularly important in the case of sororities and fraternities, which have no equivalent in the French-speaking world. Students quickly realized that *le système grec* would not convey the idea of "the Greek system" as it is interpreted in an American college context. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural concerns therefore became an area of focal interest to the students.

Students collaboratively wrote multiple drafts of essays on their particular topic, which I read and commented on. When each team was satisfied with the text portion of its topic presentation, the students shifted their attention to how they might use video and sound to enhance their description.

The Instructional Technology Program on campus graciously loaned us a High–8 video camera for shooting video segments. The camera had built-in sound, so additional recording equipment was unnecessary. After deciding in advance what they would film, and from what angles, students shot their video footage. Although they were film novices, many of them showed extraordinary creativity in their filming. One important question that arose in organizing the introduction was how to visually represent a link between Berkeley and France. The solution was to open "Découvrir Berkeley" with a scanned image of the Campanile and San Francisco Bay, with the "tricolore" (blue, white, red of the French flag) superimposed on the sky portion of the image (done with Adobe Photoshop).

Video segments were then digitized and edited by a staff member of the Instructional Technology Program. They were kept quite short to avoid long delay when they were loaded. Students' essays were converted to HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) format, and I and staff of the Instructional Technology Program assembled the components into their final form.

"Découvrir Berkeley" resides on the Instructional Technology Program server at Berkeley:
http://www.itp.berkeley.edu/french/main.html

Evaluation

Because the project was designed and developed almost entirely by the students themselves, the students had an enormous sense of accomplishment. One student said that multimedia production on the Internet was "a lot of work," but that it was "the best project we did all year." The students' work was all the more impressive given that they had only been studying French for two semesters. Projects such as this highlight students' creativity. Furthermore, students can potentially benefit from response to their self-expression from a wide range of individuals, from all over the world.

Students also learn about ways of using technology to tap into vast informational resources. This is a skill that is becoming increasingly necessary for students to develop, regardless of their area of specialization. As one of my students remarked, "You hear about all the stuff that you can do with computers and technology, but I never knew the first thing about actually doing it myself. It's good that we get a chance to sit down and actually learn how to use computers in a French class. I wouldn't have ever taken a computer science class or anything like that."

Contributor

Rick Kern is Assistant Professor and language program director in the French Department at Berkeley. He regularly uses local area networks as well as the Internet in his language classes.

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LA CLASE DEL SEÑOR DIAZ-LA CONECCIÓN MUNDIAL (SENOR DIAZ' WORLDWIDE SPANISH CLASSROOM)

Context

St. Andrew's School in Austin, Texas is reaching across our city, state, country, and world through technology to provide a FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools) classroom on the World Wide Web with Spanish language instruction and activities for schools, teachers, and any interested students.

Description

Henry Cisneros, Harvard graduate, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and former mayor of San Antonio, said that future leaders of Texas would need to know three languages: English, Spanish and computer. We at St. Andrew's School believe that this is true not only in Texas but for the whole country. As a result of our school's strengths, successes and awards in both Spanish and computer technology programs over the years we are now creating a unique Internet classroom that will build on these combined assets to share with others what we have developed. We offer *La Clase del Señor Diaz-La Conección Mundial.*

The technological framework for the classroom is being created and maintained by the St. Andrew's eighth grade telecommunication class in conjunction with their instructor, Diann Boehm. These students are learning the HTML language (Hypertext Markup Language — a system for tagging various parts of a Web document that tells the browsing software how to display the document's text, links, graphics and other attached media) to achieve the technical end of the project.

Working together with one of their instructors, Dan Dickey, students at different levels from the first through eighth grades are creating parts of the Spanish instruction and lessons with vocabulary lists, songs, reports, homework assignments, video narratives, keypal correspondence and many other activities. These students will also be enhancing their computer skills, using their years of Spanish study to help teach others, and reinforcing their own reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in Spanish.

Students and teachers everywhere accessing the Spanish classroom via the Internet will be exposed to an exciting new learning experience in Spanish without the fear of mistakes that language classrooms can sometimes produce. They will have an opportunity to begin and improve their use of Spanish through learning skills in reading and vocabulary, simple writing with assignments such as making weather reports and corresponding with our students in Spanish, getting pronunciation practice through songs, and listening to Spanish commentary on short videos (it is relatively easy to send digitized audio and video over the Internet.) New speech synthesis tools in Spanish will allow students receiving the file to hear the text read out loud thus, enhancing their listening skills.

The Spanish classroom not only contains language instruction but also information and activities on Hispanic culture, celebration days, customs, folk music and geography. In addition to the instruction described above, La Clase will become a central gathering place or clearinghouse for additional instruction or activities created by Spanish teachers using the Internet.

A preliminary survey on the Internet has shown us that many teachers and students across the United States would be very interested in participating in our clase. As a result of this classroom we hope to create an innovative new form of education. We are just now in the process of creating La Clase but we plan to have it operational in September of 1995. Please visit our site or have your students visit and do an assignment. We will post work from our Spanish students everywhere. The address for La Clase del Senor Diaz is:

http//sierra.onr.com/sainta/standrew.html

Evaluation

We believe that our project has a four-fold impact:

1 St. Andrew's students are experiencing cooperative and integrated learning as they work together to create and perfect the Spanish classroom on the school's Web site. Our students are increasing their knowledge of Spanish and perfecting their technology skills which will ultimately prepare them for the future with the information super highway.
2. Students accessing the classroom will have a well-rounded exposure to the Spanish language and culture or through their teachers' access, their existing curricula will be enhanced. Through our classroom many students will have Spanish instruction that otherwise would not be available to them for a variety of reasons including from lack of funds to remoteness of location.
3. Hopefully, this classroom will be a model for other schools to create similar classrooms from their own curriculum and instructional strengths.
4. National and global friendships and cultural understanding can and will be engendered within the framework of the Spanish classroom via the Internet. The program is being set up in a way that will allow us to survey, register, and keep records of various schools, both those in formal and informal relationships that log in to our classroom. Each formal participating site is being asked to fill out monthly and year end evaluation surveys. The monthly surveys contain an evaluation by the user of La Clase based on the preceding month's activities. The surveys will also contain requests from the user on what content they would like to see in future months. This format will enable us to modify the content of the lessons to be responsive to the user's needs, and give us some ability to check the degree to which the user is utilizing the classroom, therefore validating the user's suggestions. The year-end surveys contain similar information from the monthly surveys with expanded questions asking for schools to share how La Clase was effective in their school, how their students' Spanish awareness improved, and suggestions for changes or improvements for the following year.

Contributors

Dan Dickey (M. A. U T Austin) is a musician who plays a variety of Latin American music and instruments, and taught in the Music Department at the University of Texas at Austin for a number of years. He has done extensive fieldwork in Latin America and has taught Spanish at St. Andrew's since 1981.

Diann Boehm is a former "Computer Teacher of the Year" award winner in Texas and has taught at St. Andrew's since 1988.

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WORLD WIDE WEB CULTURE PAGES

Context

This project was carried out between advanced EFL students of technical writing at Helsinki University of Technology (HUT), EFL students at Sogang University in Korea, and a class of American students at Lehigh University in the United States. Culture pages, however, can be written by students of any foreign language at the intermediate level or above.

Description

Students at HUT have been engaged in international e-mail projects for several years (see, for example, "International Robot Activity" and "International Environmental Activity" in Part Two of this volume). In evaluations of previous projects, they've remarked that they would like to have more personal contact with students abroad and would like to know more about their cultures. As a result of this, we decide to create World Wide Web Culture pages for the Finnish students to tell the world about their culture and to learn more about other cultures. Two other classes in Korea and the U.S. also agreed to create pages and to link them on the Web.

This is a brief description of how the WWW Culture pages were made at HUT. The students formed small groups and suggested various ain headings for the Culture Page menu and then made subdivisions. A document explaining how to make a WWW page and also instructions for linking the pages to the main menu page were put on the WWW, and a student was appointed to do the linking. In each group, one student was appointed as the technical assistant and helped the others with scanning pictures and technical problems which arose. In the future, technical tips can be obtained from the Technical Help page (under construction)

http://www.hut.fi/~rvilmi/help/technical.html

The main headings suggested for the Finnish Culture Pages include The Soul of the Finn Finnish art, Finnish beer and spirits, Finnish folklore, Finnish food, Finnish laws, Finnish pastimes, Finnish language, Finnish sports, and Finnish mythology

The Soul of the Finn tells what Finns are like both from the point of view of a Finnish student and according to other people. Finnish beer and spirits was the first topic to be chosen, and almost the last to be completed! The Finnish food page tells about some traditional dishes and drinks, and gives a few recipes.The Finnish pastimes page is well worth reading. Karri-Pekka Laakso has written pages about Finnish board games, card games and gambling, and has found very many interesting links, for example, the WWW backgammon page, chess on the Web, the WebMind game and role playing games (international and Finnish links). His links to the English football league and the National Hockey League in America will certainly be of interest to all students of English, as a great deal of information about England the USA can be accessed from these links. Also linked to the Finnish pastimes age is information about Hams in Finland.

Sports is a very popular topic with the Americans in our project, but so far only two Finns have written culture pages on sports. They include a page on Finnish basketball, and very many pages about Choy Le Fut. I am expecting some comments from the Korean students from Sogang niversity when they start their culture pages soon.

Although all the students at HUT are students of technology, they are very keen to write about non-technical subjects. Toni Kopra made some good pages on Finnish music, the best and the worst of it, and managed to get a beautiful picture of Sibelius from a Finnish bank note! Also linked to the Finnish Art page are several well-written pages by Katariina Aalto on Finnish design. These include articles on Alvar Aalto, Kaj Frank, Tapio Virkkala, Tapio Sarpeneva and Oiva Toikka.

Finland is perhaps best known for its sauna, and this has not been forgotten — see the page on Finnish folklore! Other students have written about Finnish rights of access; nature and the laws governing it are very important to Finns. In addition, Finnish mythology is very important and the Kalevala has been remembered by Tuija Mielonen. Hannu Rummukainen has written about the Finnish language and has found some interesting links, whereas Cornelia Jecu, a Romanian student, has written about Indo-European languages, and compared a few English, Romanian, and Finnish words. Pages on Finnish writers, a Finnish painter, and a Finnish sportsman, Paavo Nurmi, are under construction at the HUT Open University.

The Culture Page Menu and links to the documents can be viewed at the URL
http://www.hut.fi/~rvilmi/spring95/culture/index.html

At Lehigh University topics include:

Favorite arts, actors, and movies
Favorite places
Favorite magazines, readings, and comics
Music preferences
Sports interests
Student Home Pages links
USENET Discussion Groups on Culture for Various World Regions
USENET Discussion Groups on World News for Various World Regions

Lehigh University's cutlure page can be viewed at
http://www.lehigh.edu/~ddm2/loccul.html

Pages at Sogang University in Korea are presently being created and will also be linked.

Evaluation

This was a novel way for the students to do creative writing, and many of them put a lot of time and energy into it. Also, this was only a small part of their course requirements. (They were also required to publish three articles in the Individual Writing Exchange — see article in Part Two of this volume — and write comments on other students' articles, do three oral presentations, do a demonstration of their culture pages and contribute to a class glossary.) Some students found the course too demanding and dropped out. On the other hand, some have written to ask if they can finish their work in the autumn. I think this is acceptable.

In the future, only highly-motivated students should participate in e-mail courses. I feel that the courses are very rewarding for the right students and that the students in the HUT Language Centre and at Lehigh University have done some excellent work. I am looking forward to seeing the pages made by Bill Burns' students at Sogang University, Korea. The HUT Culture Pages drew a great deal of interest at the 1995 TESOL conference in Long Beach. All the teachers involved felt that their students would receive much greater depth in cultural sensitivity training in the near future in such WWW class exercises.

Contributor

Ruth Vilmi teaches mostly Finnish undergraduate students of technology from many different disciplines. She has a Diploma in EFL from London University.

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WEB PUBLISHING FOR STUDENTS OF EST

Context

To appreciate the value of Web publishing for students of EST (English for Science and Technology), it is helpful to realize that, traditionally, only one kind of publication "counts" in science: peer-reviewed, international journal articles in English. This is a daunting, but obligatory task for most EFL biologists. Fortunately, the World Wide Web offers our doctoral students the chance to practice their writing and publish their work in a more forgiving environment.

At the Center for Biological Research (Mexico), we use the Web for two activities: research and publishing. To improve the English of our researchers, this center relies heavily on Internet sources of comprehensible input. The Web has proven to be a friendly and searchable medium for accessing mountains of scientific information in English.

For scientific publishing, the Web helps beginning writers "get their feet wet" without the risk of rejection. The anxiety of editorial review can provoke the affective filter of many L2 scientists trying to write in English. In contrast, the Web provides a non-threatening environment for their publishing aspirations.

Description

We begin with an extensive search for scientific resources using Netscape. Students keep a bookmark file of specific sites and documents that have helped them in their field of research.

Depending on the depth of investigation, a good net search can yield more than a hundred documents, particularly if bio-Gophers are targeted with Veronica (also available via the Web). During this search activity, students also learn to appreciate the characteristics of a well written Web page and take notes of HTML features they would like to use in their own pages.

The second phase involves the actual writing of their WWW pages. There is a delicate issue to consider. Giving away too much information about their research can be risky. Scientific thievery is a real concern. Our students ultimately want their work be published by a peer-reviewed journal, so they confer with their thesis directors to help them write "just enough, but not too much."

During the writing and revision of their web documents, students keep a "digital learning log," to profit from error correction; see:

http://www.cibnor.conacyt.mx/est/learnlog.html

We correct Web documents with the same attention to detail as journal articles. However, unlike the often brutal corrections of journal referees, we address the specific linguistic needs of the L2 writer. Students learn to use an HTML editor to "mark up" their documents. After careful consideration of the various editors for Windows, we have chosen HTML Writer as the easiest to teach and use (available from *http://lal.cs.byu.edu/people/nosack/*).

We practice "bandwidth friendly publishing", despite student temptation to make their pages more dazzling with unnecessary pictures and icons. Bandwidth ecology is a concern of this institution; students can only include scientific graphics in their WWW pages.

We encourage students to include links to other Internet documents related to their field of research. Linking to other work (1) emphasizes the point that science is not created in a vacuum, but bolstered through the previous efforts of others, and (2) reinforces the original reason for scientific publishing. We ask students to include a comment page to elicit reaction from potential viewers of their work. This is simply a link to a boilerplate page which is modified to direct comments to the e-mail address of the author. We hope that native English speaking scientists will leave a comment when they visit our student pages.

The final activity is the promotion of their pages. This too involves careful thought. A page describing specialized science is not appropriate for the newsgroup, *comp.infosystems.www.announce*. Students must find scientific forums that are conducive to the promotion of their pages, then phrase an announcement that will inspire a visit by other scientists.

Evaluation

Our Web project has barely begun. We have overcome the most difficult part, that of installing (1) a reliable Internet connection (2) a good student lab, (3) a good Web server, and (4) the right tools for web publishing. The rest is easy by comparison.

Students are currently in the writing phase of this project. We believe that a medium as friendly and compelling as the World Wide Web will motivate students to publish their best science. Student work can be seen at:

http://www.cibnor.conacyt.mx/

Contributor

Roy Bowers is the Academic Coordinator of the Ph.D. program at the Center for Biological Research and owner of EST-L (Teachers of English for Science and Technology: *EST-L@ASUVM.INRE.ASU.EDU)*.

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EX*CHANGE: ELECTRONIC, XROSS CULTURAL, HYPERTEXTUAL ACADEMY OF NON-NATIVE GATHERINGS IN ENGLISH

Context

EX*CHANGE is a not-for-profit World Wide Web (WWW) publication organized by a team of graduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Its intended audience is adult ESL/EFL learners at varying levels of proficiency, ESL/EFL instructors, and anyone else interested in world-wide cultures, opinions, and news.

Description

The mission of EX*CHANGE is two-fold: (1) to provide an opportunity for non-native English speakers to improve their English and express themselves through the use of English, (2) to create a unique source of knowledge and insights about different cultures from people whose ideas might otherwise not be known to English speakers due to language barriers. To accomplish this mission, EX*CHANGE primarily publishes writings of non-native English speakers from all over the world. EX*CHANGE does not follow the traditional concepts of magazine publication so the concept of "issue" does not apply. Submissions are published as soon as they are reviewed and accepted. Because of that, EX*CHANGE is always expanding and evolving.

EX*CHANGE is organized into four major sections: World Cultures, World News and Events, Stories, and Learning Resources. The World Cultures section gives learners a chance to share different aspects of their cultures including personal accounts about customs, traditions, and events. This ever-expanding collection of articles can be accessed from a list of topics or from a list of countries. From time to time, a "hot topic" is posted to encourage writing about a given theme. Past articles have included birthday celebrations in different cultures and roles of regions within countries, for example.

The World News and Events section contains articles divided into five categories: Featured Articles, which are based on a given topic, Yesterday, which includes news from the past, Today, which contains current news, Tomorrow, which contains noteworthy future events, and Misc, which is a hodgepodge of various articles. Example topics have included news written by students about Korea, Thailand, and Zaire.

The Stories section is comprised of submissions of short stories as well as chain stories. The chain stories foster collaborative writing since they provide the opportunity for students to begin stories that other students may continue. Examples of submissions in this section have included the short story "The Lemon King" by Greg Jahiel, and a chain story called "Spare Change."

The Learning Resources section is divided into six categories: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, Grammar Tutorials, Learning Tips, and References for English learning. Each of these categories contains submissions geared for people wishing to access English learning materials. Example resources have included a hypertextual reading activity about the state of Arizona and a dialog about a visit to a dentist's office — with sound links to listen to the dialog as well. Links to other Web sites for English language learning are provided here too.

Evaluation

EX*CHANGE serves as an example of how the World Wide Web can be used to encourage interested English learners to share their views through writing. Unlike the traditional classroom environment in which the students' writing is read only by the instructor and possibly other students in the class, EX*CHANGE gives students a chance to reach a world-wide audience. Contributors to EX*CHANGE also need not be current students in ESL/EFL courses, and so this provides an opportunity for virtually any learner to contribute. In turn, these authors may receive feedback from editors and their readers.

In terms of the editing of submissions, the EX*CHANGE staff aims to provide an outlet for the expression of ideas and so they give feedback concerning the content of the submissions as opposed to picking apart various grammatical aspects of the submissions. Since the main goal is to provide such a communicative environment, the many readers of EX*CHANGE will encounter varieties of English writing styles as well as structures.

In addition, EX*CHANGE serves as an example of how the World Wide Web can encourage the creative development of ESL/EFL professionals and in-service teachers. The Learning Resources section of EX*CHANGE can be viewed as a repository for hypertextual activities and also regular text activities. This provides endless opportunities for instructors, in-service teachers, and students of teaching ESL/EFL to share creative activities with a global audience.

Instructors who have access to a networked computer classroom can also introduce EX*CHANGE to their students. This indeed could be a useful supplement to composition courses, reading courses, or listening courses.

Finally, EX*CHANGE provides all of its readers with a place to read about different opinions and teaching activities. Since EX*CHANGE is always changing, it serves as a forum for the expression of opinions that would not necessarily be expressed in traditional printed publications.

The editors of EX*CHANGE are continually seeking contributions from ESL/EFL students, professionals, and other interested individuals. For information about how to contribute to EX*CHANGE, and to experience EX*CHANGE, point your Web browser to the following URLs: Graphical Format:
http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/exchange/
Text Only Format:
http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/exchange/exchange.html

Contributor

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WEB NEWSLETTER '95: A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT FOR TECHNICAL WRITING INSTRUCTION

Context

The Web Newsletter project presents a practical strategy for ESL/EFL teachers to use computers to teach technical writing and professional communication. At the Chinese University of Hong Kong, we have been exploring new ways of teaching English since the Campus Backbone Network was put in place in 1991. By integrating the Internet into a technical writing course, we have managed to motivate students to explore the Internet and other computer resources; to report on their findings and to publish collectively an Internet newsletter of the class.

Two classes of students, totally 34, are involved in the curriculum-based project. The name of the course is Technical Communication (Two sections with a total of 28 students under the charge of another teacher, Linda Mak, are also involved in a similar project.) The participants are learners of English as a second language at the upper intermediate level. They are in the age group of 19 to 25 and have been learning English for more than 12 years. They meet three hours per week for 13 weeks in the term.

Description

The project teaches technical writing in the form of memos, minutes of meetings, and technical reports for authentic communication purposes. The main theme of the writing activities is about new ways of using computers and Internet resources for language teaching and learning. The highlight of the course is the electronic publication of, in the form of a World Wide Web homepage, an Internet newsletter of the class.

A description of the project covers four main points: first, the course objectives and syllabus design; second, arrangements of computer training workshops; third, assignments and assessments; fourth, the planning and organization of the class newsletter.

THE COURSE OBJECTIVES AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

The course aims at helping science students communicate effectively in technical and professional situations with a variety of audiences including both specialists and non-specialists. The syllabus covers 13 weeks of class work and takes a collaborative learning approach. Students work in teams to complete a term project: putting together their writing samples and technical reports in the form of an Internet class newsletter.

A brief outline of the syllabus, excluding all the details of reading assignments, will look like something as follows:

Week 1:	Why technical and professional communication? Class survey of language needs and computer skills ILC visit and self-access work: MacBasics tutorial program. (ILC is our Independent Learning Centre where students have access to computers and the Internet.)

Week 2: Writing Basics: class discussion of criteria of effective writing
Strategies for technical writing
Advance notice of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) workshop

Week 3: Introduction to Internet and CALL for English enhancement
Basic features of reports, memo, short informal report and progress report
E-mail workshop at the Independent Learning Centre
Workshop reports: Oral (5 min.) and written (500 words) report due

Week 4: Newsgroup workshop at ILC
Workshop reports: Oral (5 min.) and written (500 words) report due

Week 5: Mosaic workshop at ILC (14/2)
Workshop reports: Oral (5 min.) and written (500 words) report due

Week 6: Graphics
Technical report assignment
Technical report sample

Week 7: CD-ROM Seminar and bibliographic instruction

Week 8: Class newsletter: 1st editorial meeting to set up editorial board and standards; to brainstorm contents, layout etc.
Team proposal on the class magazine due
Use of computer and Internet: 1–2 page proposal outlining who will write what and how to gather information (survey? interview?)
Submit topic for individual oral presentation and book equipment

Week 9: Training for oral presentation: "Making Your Case" (A training video)
Abstracts
Individual oral presentations begin

Week 10: Individual oral presentations
Summary abstract due
Drafting and revising

Week 11: 2nd Class editorial meeting
Minutes of meetings due within one week
Each student has to produce the first draft of article s/he writes for the class newsletter for peer comments and editing
Compiling the first draft of the whole newsletter

Week 12: Technical report and group oral presentations due
Class comments on layout, graphics of the newsletter
Proofreading, final layout editing, printing and binding

Week 13: Course evaluation and distribution of the class magazine

COMPUTER TRAINING WORKSHOPS

As shown in the syllabus, five computer training workshops are provided for students. These workshops help students master the basic tools required for their report assignments and eventually for their publication of the Internet newsletter of the class.

- E-mail workshop
- CALL workshop
- Newsgroup workshop
- World Wide Web workshop
- CD-ROM and research skills workshop (offered with the help of a University librarian)

The workshops help students to learn useful Internet tools such as e-mail, newsgroup, FTP, Gopher, World Wide Web homepages such as The Independent Learning Centre homepage:
http://www.cuhk.hk/eltu/ilc
The Chinese University of Hong Kong homepage:
http://www.cuhk.hk/

The latter page includes a "Simple Guide to WWW Pages Creation" written by Anton Lam of the Computer Services Center of CUHK. It is a must for beginning learners of the Hypertext Markup Language. There are seven parts:

- What are WWW Servers, Clients, http, and HTML?
- HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)
- HTML Utilities
- Imagemap
- Fill-out Forms
- Clients and Performance Considerations
- More Information Sources

Other training resources include:

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL):
http://owl.trc.purdue.edu/
(This is perhaps one of the most organized online writing laboratories. It provides over 100 sets of handouts on writing and it also provides one-to-one writing counselling service.)

Frequently Asked Questions on WWW:
http://sunsite.unc/edu/boutell/faq/www_faq.html

Entering the World Wide Web: A Guide to Cyberspace
http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/guide/www/guide.html
(This is an important source for teachers interested in using the Web for instruction.)

The ultimate goal is to initiate groups of students to explore the Internet and to report their discovery journeys in a newsletter of the class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Students are trained to report to their department heads on software or Internet resources useful to their own academic disciplines. In writing and by oral presentations, they comment on and recommend CALL software and discuss applications of e-mail, newsgroupa, and Web pages useful for language learning and for their academic disciplines. They learn to edit their own writings, to comment on peers' work in a class newsgroup, and to select the better ones for their class newsletter. An experimental assessment scheme is used:

Assessment Scheme

1.	Three short reports on any three of the workshops provided: Selected reports will be published in a class magazine. (3 X 10%)	30%
2.	Group Project (Technical Report including abstract and graphics)	30%
3.	Oral Presentations (individual: 15% + group: 15%); self-select topics about computer & Internet resources	30%
4.	Class participation, attendance and contribution to newsgroup discussion	10%

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING THE NEWSLETTER

The publication procedure can perhaps be summarized as the "6Ms": tiMe, equipMent, Manpower organization, Method & Money and HTML (Hypertext Markup Language):

tiMe

There are about 13 weeks in one term at CUHK. The actual planning and first editorial meeting starts around mid-term. It takes more than half of the term to get the newsletter published.

equipMent

For the printed version of the newsletter, the standard word-processing software such as WordPerfect, Winword, MS Word are needed. Printshop Deluxe is good for the graphics. Pagemaker is a more sophisticated tool, but it is not a must. For the electronic version on WWW, the editors need to know the basics of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).

(wo)Manpower

A practical way of organizing the human resources is to divide the class into an editorial team of four plus several reporting teams of three.

Method

Every member of the class is to submit at least three short individual assignments by posting in the class newsgroup. That will make sure the editorial team will have plenty to choose from. The editorial team follows a simple selection scheme as follows:

3 Highly recommended for inclusion

2 Recommended for revision

1 Not recommended

Writers then revise their own articles.

Money

Individual teams submit their financial budgets of the Newsletter. The editorial team will act as the financial controller. The final budget is shared equally by all. The electronic version of the newsletter cost us little as the Internet access has been provided by the University. But the printed version may cost a small fee per student depending on the number of pages. In our case, for a newsletter of about 100 pages, it takes about HK$38 per copy, that is, about US$5 per copy.

HTML

Hypertext Markup Language is the language used to define the layout of information and the linkage between different pieces of information on the Web. It is available at:

http://www.cuhk.hk/csc/demo/

The language is not a programming language but a simple language on format. Students can manage the basics in a couple of hours and they do not have to be computer majors.

Evaluation

Student excitement about writing on aspects of the Internet is the most rewarding part of the newsletter project. They write for a real audience, their fellow students and all the users of the World Wide Web. They don't write merely to "please the teacher.' They take greater responsibility for their own learning and take extra time to write after class. The rewards of this excitement are great.

REWARDS

The general feedback from students has been positive and encouraging. Students feel that the project has helped them in four main areas:

Technical Writing Skills

They learned to write formal and informal reports with appropriate formats and to use graphics properly. They have become more aware of the criteria of effective technical writing through revision and peer comments.

Presentation Skills

Students found the presentation sessions useful; the teacher and peer evaluation of their performance good training opportunities. Some students helped others to use presentation tools like Microsoft Powerpoint to enhance their group reports.

Collaborative Research Skills

Their collaborative research reports are convincing testimony of their team work and appropriate application of skills they learnt from their own academic disciplines and also during the process of discovering, sharing and reporting.

Computer Literacy

All of them have learnt to use the information super-highway to communicate with people by means of e-mail, USENET newsgroups, and Netscape.

There is a spirit of partnership in a journey of discovery. Students and teacher alike feel like partners in education. One inspiring example is the follow-up communication even after the course is over. A student found a useful resource and e-mailed me and the whole class even after the class newsletter was published.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The project, though successful, presents a number of problems and challenges. Timing is critical in the planning of the newsletter. Advance organization is essential. Very often students find there is not enough time for discussion and exchange of information. The editorial team felt that it was very hard to stick to the schedule and to put the newsletter together. If one of the reporting teams is late in submitting their group project report, the whole project has to be delayed.

Copyright is also an important issue in the publishing of the class homepage on the Internet. People find it so easy to copy and paste other's work — not just texts, but also graphics, photos and pictures in electronic forms. Acknowledgment of sources is not always good enough. Permission from the copyright owner must be sought. Otherwise, the editorial team runs the risks of plagiarism and copyright infringement. It would be wise for students and teachers not to include any copyrighted graphics in their homepage, but to create materials of their own. Copyright on the Internet is a complicated issue with legal and ethical implications. It must be handled with great caution.

Another challenge is the inadequacy of instruction and computer training during and after the workshops. Even with clear handouts designed for self-access, new Internet users find it difficult to learn the target skills on their own. They learn more effectively in groups of three sharing one computer terminal. That encourages group discussion and sharing of skills and discoveries. It is important to have the technical support of computer consultants.

Next, the suggested assessment scheme is not really easy or simple to carry out. It is teacher-centered and rather subjective. A more interesting idea is to supplement the scheme with two more dimensions of evaluation: self-evaluation and peer evaluation. To evaluate a collaborative learning project, it is important to ask students to evaluate their own roles as well. For example, they could be asked to write answers to questions such as:

- What final grade would you give yourself in this project and why?
- What final grades would you give your partners and why?

Such questions help students to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as learners and members in a collaborative team project.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

A newsletter of the class is not a new idea for teaching writing, but focusing on the pedagogic dynamics of using the Internet definitely brings a new perspective. The writing project has been a valuable experience for all the participants of the course. It is an exciting way of using computers for technical writing instruction and there is a lot of potential for research and development. However, few studies about the effects of cooperative learning in technical communication classes are available. Interesting research questions could be raised for further exploration such as:

1. What are important variables in the pedagogic dynamics of collaborative learning on the Internet? What are the strengths and weaknesses of learning technical communication on the "information superhighway"?
2. What is the most effective size for a cooperative learning group? Does it vary with the type of tasks undertaken? In face-to-face communication and in electronic communication situations, how does the most effective group size vary?
3. What is the relationship between group responsibility and individual accountability? How could they be balanced in a constructive and productive way?
4. What gains do stronger and weaker students make in a collaborative learning group? Are they the same or different? How do we improve the learning experience for learners of mixed abilities?

Contributor

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Appendix

List of topics chosen by teams of course participants for their technical report assignments:

ELT3113B

1. The Attitdues of Arts and Science Students Towards Computers
2. Introduction to Pathfinders
3. World Wide Web and the Chinese University of Hong Kong
4. Introduction to General Computer Facilities for CUHK Students

ELT3113H

1. A Comparison of CUHK Students Beliefs about Writing by Computer and by Hand
2. Learners' Attitudes Towards ILC Facilities
3. Report on (Aspects of) Internet Resources
4. Review on (ILC) CALL Workshops
5. Preference of CUHK Students Towards Non-compulsory, Self-access English Learning Media

APPENDIX A

FLTEACH:
ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

Introduction

A primary concern of foreign language (FL) teachers is to enable their students to communicate in the target language (TL), the eventual goal being the ability to engage in meaningful interaction and interchange with native speakers of the TL and to access TL materials and texts (for example, written, aural, visual). Language educators are continually searching for the most effective means to realize this goal, and technological advancements have enhanced their progress toward this end. Foreign language classrooms no longer need to depend solely on pictures in the textbooks or the cache of realia that the more fortunate FL teachers are able to amass on trips abroad for exposure to authentic materials and TL culture. The use of the Internet as a virtual tool for classroom teachers has opened up amazing possibilities for TL connections and communication. These possibilities are delimited only by the imagination of the FL teacher, the students, and access to Internet sites.

The suggestions for and examples of projects using the resources of the Internet in the FL classroom contained in this volume should serve as an inspiration to its readers. While necessarily finite in number, these examples will hopefully segue to more activities stemming from investigation of the Internet. Such an investigation can be quite time-consuming and, for many, too daunting to undertake on one's own. Fortunately, FL teachers have another recourse — connecting with other educators via a foreign language discussion forum designed precisely for collegial sharing of knowledge, expertise, and experience relating to FL education. By participating in such a forum, FL teachers can more easily become apprised of new trends and issues in the field, among which can certainly be counted the use of Internet resources in the FL classroom. This article discusses one such forum, FLTEACH, providing a brief description, history, rationale, modus operandi, and finally offering numerous suggestions for FL educators to benefit from participation in the forum, both personally and professionally in their classroom.

The *Whs* of FLTEACH

FLTEACH, the Foreign Language Teaching Forum, is a LISTSERV list founded on February 1st of 1994 and running on a computer at SUNY/Buffalo. A LISTSERV list is an ongoing electronic discussion group, formed for people of similar interests. The purpose of FLTEACH is to serve as a forum for discussion and communication among FL professionals in all educational settings: elementary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. All FL educators who are involved with the development or implementation of FL curricula or who play a role in the certification process of preservice FL teachers are the targeted audience and participants of the list. Also represented in the membership of the list are governmental agencies charged with language instruction and private businesses concerned primarily with FL education (e.g., publishers).

FLTEACH was formed as a result of a dialogue about foreign language education that was motivated by several documents and mandates, among them *America 2000: An Educational*

Strategy or *Goals 2000*, (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1992), SUNY 2000 (New York State, 1992), and the Interim Report of the LOTE (Languages Other Than English) Committee. The essential messages contained therein are that FL education is an essential part of the national educational curriculum and that cooperative arrangements between elementary, secondary and postsecondary institutions are necessary in order to improve language instruction at all levels (American Council on Education, 1989; Benitez, et al., 1993). Unfortunately, another message explicit in these documents is that "the foreign language instruction in the United States is woefully inadequate" (New York State, 1992, p. 27) and that communication among FL professionals is needed to ameliorate the situation.

Articulation is a basic premise of these documents and was the motivating factor behind the teleconference "Bridging the Gap," aired in October of 1993 in the state of New York. Foreign language educators from secondary and tertiary level institutions participated, and numerous follow-up meetings have attempted to facilitate this articulation, to the end of realizing the SUNY 2000 goals in FL departments across the state. Closer collaboration among FL professionals was also called for in the keynote speech by Claire Jackson, director of the Articulation and Achievement Project out of Framingham, Massachusetts, at the annual NYSAFLT Spring Colloquium (1994). She spoke of the work toward developing common frameworks for the FL profession that will unify and assist the shared and concerted effort toward improved FL instruction, articulation, assessment, and overall student learning. This work is paralleled by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) with its current project of developing national foreign language standards (ACTFL, 1993).

Achievement of the goals of articulation and collaboration, continually mandated by these documents and leaders in the FL profession, should have an impact on every school district, college, and university nationwide that offers a FL curriculum. The implied number of FL practitioners involved is enormous, and the potential for fostering communication that would lead to the desired articulation is vast. The initiation of a dialogue among these educators became a priority, and the question became one of accomplishing these goals in the most efficient, effective, and comprehensive manner. FLTEACH was born out of the desire to unite the profession and help in the attainment of the aforementioned goals. If FL educators could communicate easily and regularly about common topics and issues, certainly the results would be a better understanding of the component parts of the profession, a clearer sense of our mission as educators, improved FL instruction enhanced by input from colleagues, increased collaboration among FL professionals and, consequently, the desired articulation that will provide optimal FL teaching and learning for our students.

An electronic discussion list was chosen as the most logical method of communication for a number of reasons. First, the technological framework was already in place (i.e., the Internet), facilitating the basic structure and operation of the list. Second, because a list disseminates information quickly, it is an expedient way to initiate and foster discussion among FL colleagues. Third, participation in a discussion list is a method of professional development and moral and professional support, such as one derives from conference attendance. Conferences, however, are few and far between, and participation on the list can be a daily regimen. Fourth, access to electronic mail and the Internet is becoming more and more commonplace and will eventually be as necessary as access to telephone and postal service.

Select Goals of FLTEACH

The goals of FLTEACH are many (cf. LeLoup & Ponterio, 1995), and a few that are germane to this discussion will be addressed here. Principal among them is the emphasis on communication among FL educators. Teaching is a relatively autonomous profession, a fact that has benefits and disadvantages. The latter can be characterized and exemplified by such factors as isolation, lack of inspiration, singleton teachers in a district, burnout from repetition with no infusion of innovative ideas, and professional stagnation, to name a few. The time constraints on teachers in their daily jobs and lives, inertia, or simply ignorance of available resources often preclude taking measures to combat the above maladies. Through FLTEACH, FL teachers can be in direct and regular contact with their colleagues around the country and, indeed, the world and can be privy to a wealth of information and resources, literally at their fingertips (if they can use a computer keyboard!). Daily, FL professionals discuss and share information, expertise, and experience with each other on a myriad of topics of interest to the FL educational community. The present volume is a representative sample of this phenomenon as it relates to the Internet. Foreign language educators are doing unique and creative projects with Internet resources, and dissemination of this activity is one function of FLTEACH. It is an excellent resource of resources.

Another major goal of FLTEACH is the increase of technology awareness and access on the part of FL practitioners[1] Clearly, if any articulation and collaboration are to take place, teachers must have access to the dialogue made possible by Internet discussion groups. Once FL educators can connect to and utilize the Internet and its resources useful to FL education, their teaching effectiveness and professional development will expand and improve immensely. Teachers who demonstrate the use of electronic resources in the classroom also provide an excellent model for those students who will go on to be FL teachers themselves. Teacher education research shows that teachers tend to teach in the same ways they were taught (Cruickshank, 1990). Consequently, it behooves FL educators and preservice FL teacher instructors to engage in innovative, creative, and effective teaching practices. Teachers who model actual *use* of electronic resources in their classrooms are planting the seed for those who follow.

FLTEACH *is* its members and, as such, is not a static entity. Its purposes and uses continually evolve with its changing and increasing membership; this is its strength. In order to tap the wealth of prior exchanges, FLTEACH maintains an archives of postings and materials of special interest to the list members. The contents and search capabilities of the archives will be discussed below (see Gopher and WWW). Suffice to say here that the information discussed in the next section (Uses) is readily available to FLTEACH members, irrespective of when they subscribe.

Sample Uses of FLTEACH

A quick perusal of the size of monthly logs gives an indication of the volume of information and postings that is typical of FLTEACH. Contained therein is a large variety of topics, clearly too numerous to mention in their entirety here. A few broad categories of postings will serve as an index to the many list exchanges, will give the reader an idea of the scope of discussion on the list, and will suggest some uses of FLTEACH for FL professionals.

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[1] For a detailed description of getting access to electronic mail, please see LeLoup & Ponterio, (1995).

NETWORKING

For connecting with other FL colleagues, the list is invaluable. All levels of educational institutions are well represented from a widely distributed geographic area. Important to a FL list, the contacts are not limited to domestic institutions: at this writing, FLTEACH has representatives from twenty-four countries around the world. Members can locate other FL educators teaching the same language(s), involved in similar classroom projects, or with parallel research interests. The support potential is obvious and is not just for the singleton teacher or those geographically isolated. Future research initiatives have even been planned and discussed on the list.

PEDAGOGICAL QUESTIONS

Listing all the postings that fall in this category would be space-prohibitive; a representative sample will easily illustrate this potential use. One member was interested in using plays in her classroom. She queried the list for ideas and received many responses with suggestions, explanations, and results from others who had previously incorporated plays in their lessons. The ubiquitous grammar questions also arise, and members are quite willing to offer their perspective as well as their ideas on how they teach these points. A few cases in point concerned teaching the differences between *ser* and *estar*, and sensitizing students to the differences between the *preterite/passé composé* and the *imperfect*.

A recent thread dealt with effective review practices in the classroom, with many members offering and describing in detail their favorite methods of reviewing for tests, semester exams, vocabulary, and so forth.

MATERIALS

Frequently FLTEACHers ask for suggestions and help in locating ancillary teaching materials, such as songs, films, and videos. Teachers are also often in search of others' perspectives on FL textbooks they are considering for adoption. Airing views about textbooks from the FL teacher's perspective is important on FLTEACH as a number of publishers' representatives subscribe and can take note of what FL teachers really want in their textbooks. Another typical query is for software assessment by those who have already used the computer applications in their classrooms.[2]

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[2] While answers to specific questions about computer applications are forthcoming on FLTEACH, another list exists that is expressly for the purpose distributing information about all aspects of the technology used in language teaching: LLTI (Language Learning and Technology International) list. Subscribers post information or questions about language labs, video, computer applications, and any technological questions related to language teaching. LLTI is also a forum where subscribers can discuss the value of products or new trends in the profession. The many experts who subscribe in order to exchange information are also very helpful to those looking for sources of information about setting up a language lab, purchasing software for computer-assisted instruction, or finding information about satellite access to foreign television broadcasts. Because the answers to all these question are archived, the LLTI list is also a data bank of information about language learning technology.

To subscribe to LLTI send an e-mail to:

LISTSERV@DARTCMS1.DARTMOUTH.EDU

with the message:

subscribe LLTI Yourfirstname Yourlastname.

LLTI is run by Otmar Foelsche, Director, Humanities Resources, Dartmouth College.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the ongoing *informal* professional development FLTEACHers engage in by communicating with their colleagues, formal opportunities are announced. Conference calls for papers, dates and times for teleconferences with FL issues, and workshops with FL-related themes are frequently announced on FLTEACH. In addition, occasional job postings appear for those interested in relocating or changing venue.

TRAVEL

Taking trips with students to TL countries is a topic perhaps peculiar to the FL profession. Questions are posed about preferences for companies, geographic destinations, and itineraries, to name a few. A rather energetic thread debated the merits and drawbacks of planning and executing student trips, and many suggestions were proffered to make such trips an optimal learning experience. Advice was also given to help make these trips as "painless" and enjoyable as possible for the teachers/chaperones.

DAILY NUTS AND BOLTS

Information necessary to the execution of a FL program in general is also requested and posted. One thread concerned block scheduling and alternative modules for the school day with their ramifications for FL classes. Members have requested curriculum guides to help restructure their own programs, and still others have requested documentation to support their bid to install FLES programs in their district. Requests for assistance in finding penpals is also a common posting. A penpal exchange is clearly not new but it has taken on a new dimension and meaning: now classrooms can have nearly instant contact with partner classrooms around the world in TL countries.[3]

INTERNET RESOURCES

As more and more FL teachers gain access to the Internet, more discoveries are made daily concerning TL sites. Teachers can find direct links to TL news sources, texts, current events, historical finds, geographic and cultural information, to name just a few. As previously stated, for one person to locate all these resources, the task would be prohibitive in time and energy. In the true collaborative spirit, TL resources are being collected and shared by various means such as Gopher sites and WWW pages. These resources will be discussed below in detail.

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[3] Once again, a specific list exists for penpal contact: IECC. The Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections (K–12) list provides a service for those FL teachers seeking partner classrooms for international and cross-cultural electronic mail exchanges. It is not a list for discussion or for people seeking individual penpals. To request a partner classroom, the FL teacher sends a message that includes descriptive information and preferences such as who and where the teacher is, how many students are in the class and the number of student contacts desired, preferred language and geographic location (i.e., country or region within a country), any other special interests, and desired beginning date for the exchange (IECC, 1995). There are also related IECC mailing lists such as those for teachers seeking classroom partnerships in Higher Education (IECC-HE), one for any kind of e-mail project announcements (IECC-PROJECTS), and one for discussing strategies for using e-mail in an educational setting (IECC-DISCUSSION). The latter list is quite helpful for those wishing to embark on penpal projects or incorporate this electronic resource into the curriculum. It offers suggestions for optimal success and also discusses typical pitfalls, all from the reference point of seasoned users. Archives of all postings to the IECC mailing lists are available via Gopher (*gopher.stolaf.edu*), the WWW (*http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/*), and anonymous FTP *ftp.stolaf.edu:pub/iecc/archive.he*).

To subscribe to IECC send an e-mail to:
    IECC-REQUEST@STOLAF.EDU
with the message:
    SUBSCRIBE
IECC is run by Craig D. Rice, Academic Computing Center, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN with assistance from Professors Bruce Roberts and Howard Thorsheim of the Psychology Department.

Gopher and WWW Page

Two major ancillary electronic resources, a Gopher site and a World Wide Web page, have been developed to support the goals of the FLTEACH discussion list. E-mail, even with the support of distribution software such as LISTSERV, is hampered by significant limitations that can be overcome by other Internet applications. E-mail was developed for transporting text and even for that purpose standards are inadequate to assure success when sending documents containing diacritical marks or non-Roman character sets. If the information includes sounds or images, successful transfer via e-mail requires careful coordination of encoding formats. The ability of various mail software packages to support such codes and the capacity of each system to store and manipulate information often seem to be different for each user. Gopher and WWW allow individuals access to such data via systems that attempt to resolve many of the formatting problems of various media while they store information in files that can be accessed when needed rather than kept on a disk in each user's system.

The FLTEACH list sends out text messages and it can even collect these messages in a searchable archive, but the LISTSERV command syntax for consulting the archive has a steep learning curve for the casual user. A simpler way to search the list for past messages about a specific topic was needed. In addition, although information about other electronic resources for FL teaching available on the network can be and often is shared via list postings, it makes sense to provide a permanent online listing of these resources and their Internet addresses. Such a collection can be located and maintained at a single site, alleviating the burden for each FL teacher of keeping a personal up-to-date listing of these resources. The FLTEACH Gopher can be found by using a Gopher browser to go to the Gopher address:

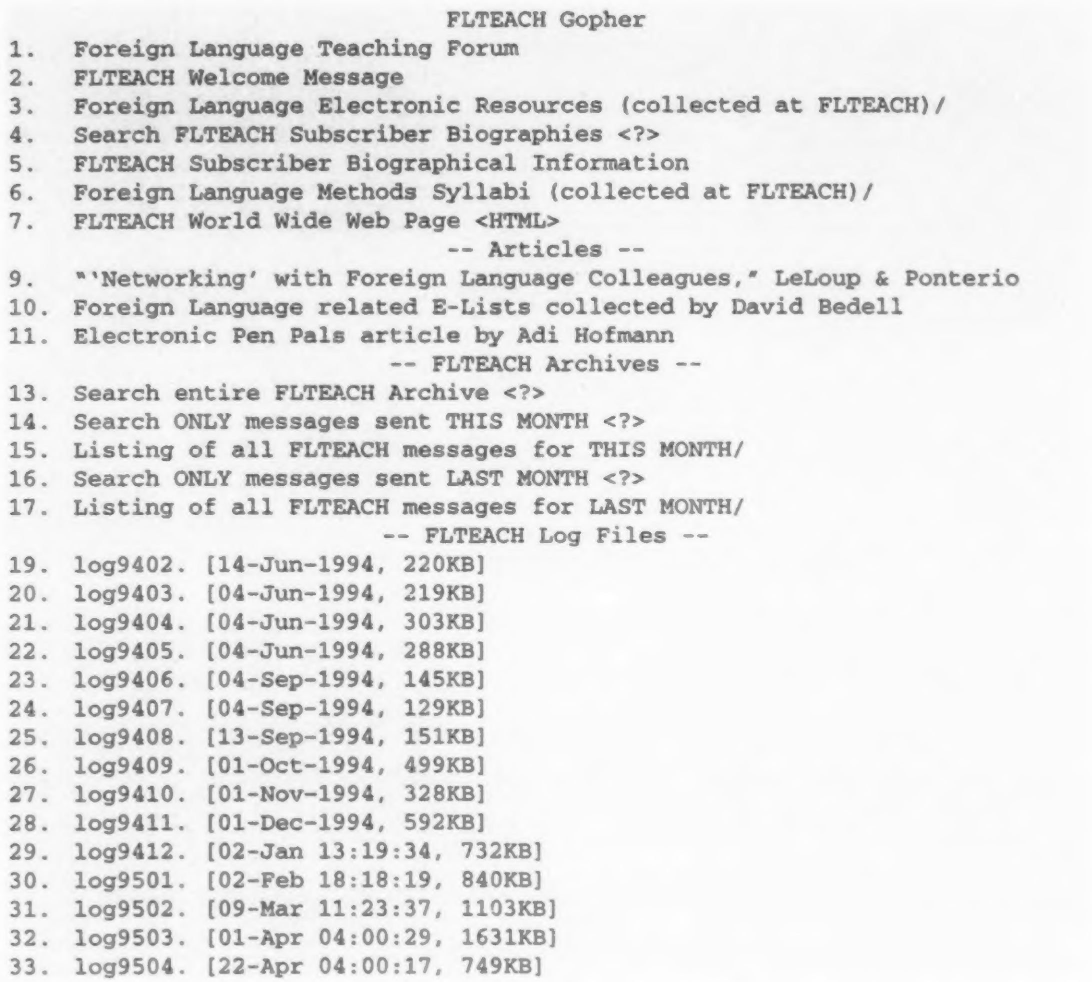
gopher.cortland.edu 71

This server was created to help solve these specific problems.

Gopher items of many types are presented in a menu listing. These types can include but are not limited to texts, images, sounds, videos, other menus, even other Gopher sites. Telnet sessions that allow the user to log-on to another computer system, interactive phone books, various kinds of computer programs that can be downloaded to the user's computer, and interactive forms that allow the user to request the Gopher to perform some function such a searching a data base extend this list of types, and still more exist that are not mentioned here. An examination of the menu items in the FLTEACH Gopher will demonstrate its uses.

FLTEACH Gopher

The appearance of a Gopher menu depends to a great extent on the client software that is being used to view it. Many graphical Gopher programs display menu items with icons that indicate their function. A telephone will suggest a telephone book, a page might mean text, a movie camera could be a video, a loudspeaker would represent a sound file. The following menu shows the FLTEACH Gopher as seen through the simplest text-based Gopher program.



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                         FLTEACH Gopher
1.   Foreign Language Teaching Forum
2.   FLTEACH Welcome Message
3.   Foreign Language Electronic Resources (collected at FLTEACH)/
4.   Search FLTEACH Subscriber Biographies <?>
5.   FLTEACH Subscriber Biographical Information
6.   Foreign Language Methods Syllabi (collected at FLTEACH)/
7.   FLTEACH World Wide Web Page <HTML>
                         -- Articles --
9.   "'Networking' with Foreign Language Colleagues," LeLoup & Ponterio
10.  Foreign Language related E-Lists collected by David Bedell
11.  Electronic Pen Pals article by Adi Hofmann
                     -- FLTEACH Archives --
13.  Search entire FLTEACH Archive <?>
14.  Search ONLY messages sent THIS MONTH <?>
15.  Listing of all FLTEACH messages for THIS MONTH/
16.  Search ONLY messages sent LAST MONTH <?>
17.  Listing of all FLTEACH messages for LAST MONTH/
                     -- FLTEACH Log Files --
19.  log9402. [14-Jun-1994, 220KB]
20.  log9403. [04-Jun-1994, 219KB]
21.  log9404. [04-Jun-1994, 303KB]
22.  log9405. [04-Jun-1994, 288KB]
23.  log9406. [04-Sep-1994, 145KB]
24.  log9407. [04-Sep-1994, 129KB]
25.  log9408. [13-Sep-1994, 151KB]
26.  log9409. [01-Oct-1994, 499KB]
27.  log9410. [01-Nov-1994, 328KB]
28.  log9411. [01-Dec-1994, 592KB]
29.  log9412. [02-Jan 13:19:34, 732KB]
30.  log9501. [02-Feb 18:18:19, 840KB]
31.  log9502. [09-Mar 11:23:37, 1103KB]
32.  log9503. [01-Apr 04:00:29, 1631KB]
33.  log9504. [22-Apr 04:00:17, 749KB]
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The first two items, "Foreign Language Teaching Forum" and "FLTEACH Welcome Message," are text files that present essential information about the FLTEACH discussion list when they are selected. The first gives background, contact, and subscription instructions while the second is a direct link to the welcome message that is sent to each subscriber, including instructions about most aspects of list operation, recommendations for special occasions such as what to do about a list when going on vacation, and netiquette guidelines for effective posting. A subscriber accessing these instructions via Gopher will obtain the most recent revision updating the version that was sent at the time of the individual's original subscription.

The next item, "Foreign Language Electronic Resources (collected at FLTEACH)/," leads to a menu of other Gopher-based resources that will be examined below. Items 4 and 5 are links to the biographical statements of FLTEACH subscribers. "FLTEACH Subscriber Biographical Information" is a text file containing all of the statements, including contact information, institution, languages, special interests, and projects. "Search FLTEACH Subscriber Biographies <?>" is a search engine. When the user selects item 4, Gopher asks for a search string. All of the biographical statements are indexed by keyword so that a search string such as "Spanish FLES"

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will create a menu of all biographical statements containing those two words. This is intended to help identify other teachers with similar interests.

The "Foreign Language Methods Syllabi (collected at FLTEACH)/" leads to a menu in which faculty responsible for FL teaching methods courses in teacher training programs may share syllabi. This is an important element in our goal to work together to improve the pre-service training of FL teachers. This project was begun subsequent to an FLTEACH discussion in which teachers complained of the inadequacy of some teacher training programs. While no pre-service training program can prepare someone for everything they might encounter as a teacher, it is hoped that we can all learn from the syllabi collected here.

Item 7 leads to the FLTEACH World Wide Web page. The level of integration of these various Internet applications is demonstrated by the fact that just as the Gopher has an item pointing to the WWW page, the Web page has a link to the Gopher.

The section of the Gopher under the heading "Articles" includes publications by FLTEACH subscribers that have been made available electronically to help FL teachers learn to use the network as a professional tool. The "Foreign Language related E-Lists collected by David Bedell" is an important resource that describes hundreds of other discussion lists of interest to FL teachers (Bedell, 1993). Adi Hofmann made his article describing an electronic penpal project available in response to a need expressed by many teachers who wished to undertake such a project but were not sure where to begin.

The FLTEACH archive section allows users to get copies of monthly logs containing all FLTEACH discussion list postings but, more importantly, it provides tools for searching or browsing the messages. Searching the entire archive is useful for quickly finding a particular message or threads on a particular topic. For example, knowing that there was a discussion of ways of introducing the "pretérito," a search for the word "pretérito" will display a listing of all of those messages.[4] The same might be done for a discussion of the pros and cons of "tracking" or of "block scheduling." Partial words may be included in the search by including the wildcard *. The string "schedul*" will find "schedule," "schedules," "scheduling," "scheduled," etc.

The other selections under the "FLTEACH Archives" rubric assist searching for recent messages. This is specially designed for those who find it difficult to subscribe to the list via e-mail. For some, the size of the disk allocation is inadequate for the amount of traffic on the list. They find that messages are often rejected because their mailbox is full. For others, it is logistically too difficult to check their mail periodically. Some teachers have no easy access to a computer that will connect them to their e-mail. It might not always be possible to find a free computer in the library or lab after school or there might simply not be time in a busy day to check the mail. They might find it easier to scan a menu of posting subjects for interesting messages. E-mail systems have undergone significant improvement in recent years but some of the older systems that are still in place are so awkward or slow that some teachers feel they are spending too much time simply waiting for the computer to display the requested information. In such situations, if messages cannot be downloaded and read off-line, Gopher can at least provide a simple and fast interface while removing the burden of deleting a large number of messages each day. For example, searching only FLTEACH messages sent this month for the word "FLTEACH" will yield a directory of all of this month's messages in chronological order listed by subject line.

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[4] Diacritical marks cannot yet be used in list postings, though this will certainly change in the future. A keyword search on the word "pretérito" then needs to be made without the accent mark.

The "Foreign Language Electronic Resources (collected at FLTEACH)/" is an extensive listing in itself. The object of providing this menu, as stated above, is to give teachers a place to find the FL related resources that others have already discovered by "surfing the net." By sharing useful addresses in this way, FL teachers can avoid having to reinvent the wheel at every turn. The most difficult challenge for many novice Internet travelers is knowing where to begin looking for resources that could be used in class. This collection, which is by no means static, represents a first step and a pointer to other sources.

```
         Foreign Language Electronic Resources (collected at FLTEACH)
 1.   Foreign Language Teaching Forum (FLTEACH)/
                                     -- News --
 3.   French : Actualites francaise (Amb. Fr, Ottawa)/
 4.   French Language Press Review (local)/
 5.   French news: Wash / L'actualité en France et dans le monde/
 6.   GERMNEWS German News/
 7.   German Information Center (Language Acquisition Center UT Arlingto../
 8.   Mensajes de Notiven (Noticias de Venezuela)/
 9.   Spanish : Ecuador Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (noticias)/
10.   Spanish : NOTICOL : Noticias de Colombia/
                               -- Language Specific --
                                     ----- French
13.   AATF: American Association of Teachers of French/
14.   French : ARTFL (Tresor de la langue francaise)/
15.   French : Annuaires electroniques en France (et finger)/
16.   French : Gopher Littératures de U de Montréal/
17.   French FTP Archives (Univ. Lyon I)/
18.   French Gophers/
19.   French Language Gopher Servers World-wide/
20.   French Libraries/
21.   French Libraries from grenet.fr/
                                     ----- German
23.   German : Gopher der Universitaet Konstanz, (DE)/
24.   German Libraries/
                                     ----- Italian
26.   Italian: Humanities (Italia)/
                                     ----- Spanish
28.   South America/
29.   Spain: RedIRIS News/
30.   Spanish : la Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico/
31.   Spanish Gophers/Gophers españoles registrados/
32.   UT-LANIC: Univ. of Texas - Latin American Network Information Cent../
                              -- General FL Resources --
34.   ACLAnet (American Comparative Literature Association) <TEL>
35.   Agora Language Marketplace/
36.   CELIA (Language Instruction) Archive (Merit Network, USA)/
37.   ECHO - European Commission Host Organisation (Telnet) <TEL>
38.   EUROSESAME/
39.   Intercultural-E-mail-Classroom-Connections (IECC)/
40.   Intl. Àssn. of Learning Labs - Dartmouth College/
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41.  Language Learning Technology International (LLTI List Archives)/
42.  Languages Other than English - OTPAD/ACT Gopher/
43.  Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL)/
44.  NLLIA <TEL>
45.  NLLIA / LATTICE call-reports/
46.  RiceInfo (Rice University CWIS) Language Tools/
47.  Satellite Communications for Learning (SCOLA)/
48.  Software Courseware Online Review at Curtin/
49.  Voice of America News in many languages (Sound files)/
                   -- Useful Resources for FL Teachers --
51.  Chronicle of Higher Education/
52.  Cornell Information (see Fall Creek and Cinemopolis for foreign fi../
53.  Distance Education Clearinghouse/
54.  ERIC Database (Syracuse Univ.)/
55.  Film database from U. Manchester/
56.  Gopher and Information Servers (by geographical location)/
57.  Kovacs - Directory of Scholarly Electronic Conferences (LISTS)/
58.  Nineteenth Century Literature (Journal)/
59.  Scholarly Resources (from Rochester)/
60.  Special Collections: Higher Education (NYSERNET)/
61.  Special Collections: k-12/
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The listing is divided into four basic sections: News, Language Specific Resources, General FL Resources, and Useful Resources for FL Teachers, each serving its own function.

Access to current news in the target language provides a rich source of authentic materials for classroom use. The immediacy of these materials, generally available on a daily basis, can make them exciting for students who find them more real than texts that cannot help but be dated. This might not make online texts better, but it does help demonstrate that the target culture represents a real and vibrant society rather than an abstract academic pursuit. Careful selection of excerpts and structuring of tasks can yield activities appropriate to the language and maturity level of a group of students.

Other language specific resources abound on the net. A good place to start in each language is the listings of Gophers by geographical region. By looking through the Gophers constructed where the TL is spoken, new resources can be discovered all the time. Organizations such as the AATF (American Association of Teachers of French) have developed specialized Gophers to serve the needs of the teachers who make up their membership. A number of university-based projects have also developed resource collections for specific academic topics. The "Gopher Littératures de U de Montréal" and the "Univ. of Texas — Latin American Network Information Center" are both excellent examples. The first seeks to support those doing research by offering access to Gopher collections related to French literature. The second includes a wide variety of connections of particular note to anyone interested in the countries of Latin America.

Many Gopher sites do not provide materials for a particular language but offer support for a broad spectrum of language teachers. The "Agora Language Marketplace" is a commercial enterprise that combines free announcements of all kinds with advertising by the larger distributors of FL materials and by the authors of materials with too small a distribution base to be of interest to these large companies. By offering a low cost marketing approach to self-publishing authors, Agora expands the language teacher's access to information about new products developed by other teachers.

The "Intercultural-E-mail-Classroom-Connections" (IECC) Gopher at St. Olaf's College assists teachers in planning and running projects in which their students use e-mail to communicate in the TL with students from other geographical locations. Finding partner classes for such projects can be a formidable undertaking for a teacher who does not already have a personal relationship with a colleague in another country. In addition to helping interested teachers find interested collaborators, IECC lets them share descriptions of successful projects and offers advice and caveats about how to run such projects.

The "International Association of Learning Labs" has a Gopher site located at Dartmouth College. This is the best place to look for help with any kind of technology needs for language labs. At this site you can also find the archives of the "Language Learning Technology International" (LLTI) electronic discussion list. This is an excellent list for asking questions about technology needs, but by looking in the list archives it is possible to see if someone else might have already asked the same question.

Several other organizations maintain significant language resources. The Office of Telecommunications Policy Analysis and Development, at the New York State Education Department in Albany, NY, has a "Languages Other than English" area on its Gopher. Louis Janus, at the University of Minnesota, lists institutions that teach specific "Less Commonly Taught Languages" (LCTL) on the Gopher there. The "Centre for Language Teaching and Research" (CLTR) is part of the "National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia," and is located at the University of Queensland, in Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA. "Satellite Communications for Learning" (SCOLA) provides online information about its satellite-based foreign television services. "Voice of America" places news broadcasts in many languages online as sound files that can be listened to after downloading.

Many other resources in addition to these can be found by Gophering. The FLTEACH collection provides a starting point to any FL educator in search of useful professional support on the network. Gopher has finally brought the old guard of Internet tools, Telnet, FTP, Archie, within the grasp of the casual user by simplifying the command structure and presenting meaningful options rather than displaying a blank screen and expecting the user to know what to do. By associating these resources with the FLTEACH discussion list, FL professionals can share their electronic discoveries with each other, allowing each new arrival to stand on the shoulders of those who came before.

FLTEACH World Wide Web Page

The World Wide Web is a powerful presentation environment both because of its ability to display mixed media and because of the fascination with a medium without boundaries. A page on the Web can contain links to other pages around the world. This is especially exciting for FL teachers seeking to bring the world into the classroom by using authentic materials. What more natural audience for a "World Wide Web"? Though the Web is quite easy to navigate, surfing or browsing to identify useful resources among the hundreds of thousands of pages that exist can be a daunting task for a busy FL teacher. The FLTEACH WWW page can be found by using a WWW browser such as Netscape to access its URL:

http://www.cortland.edu/www_root/flteach/flteach.html

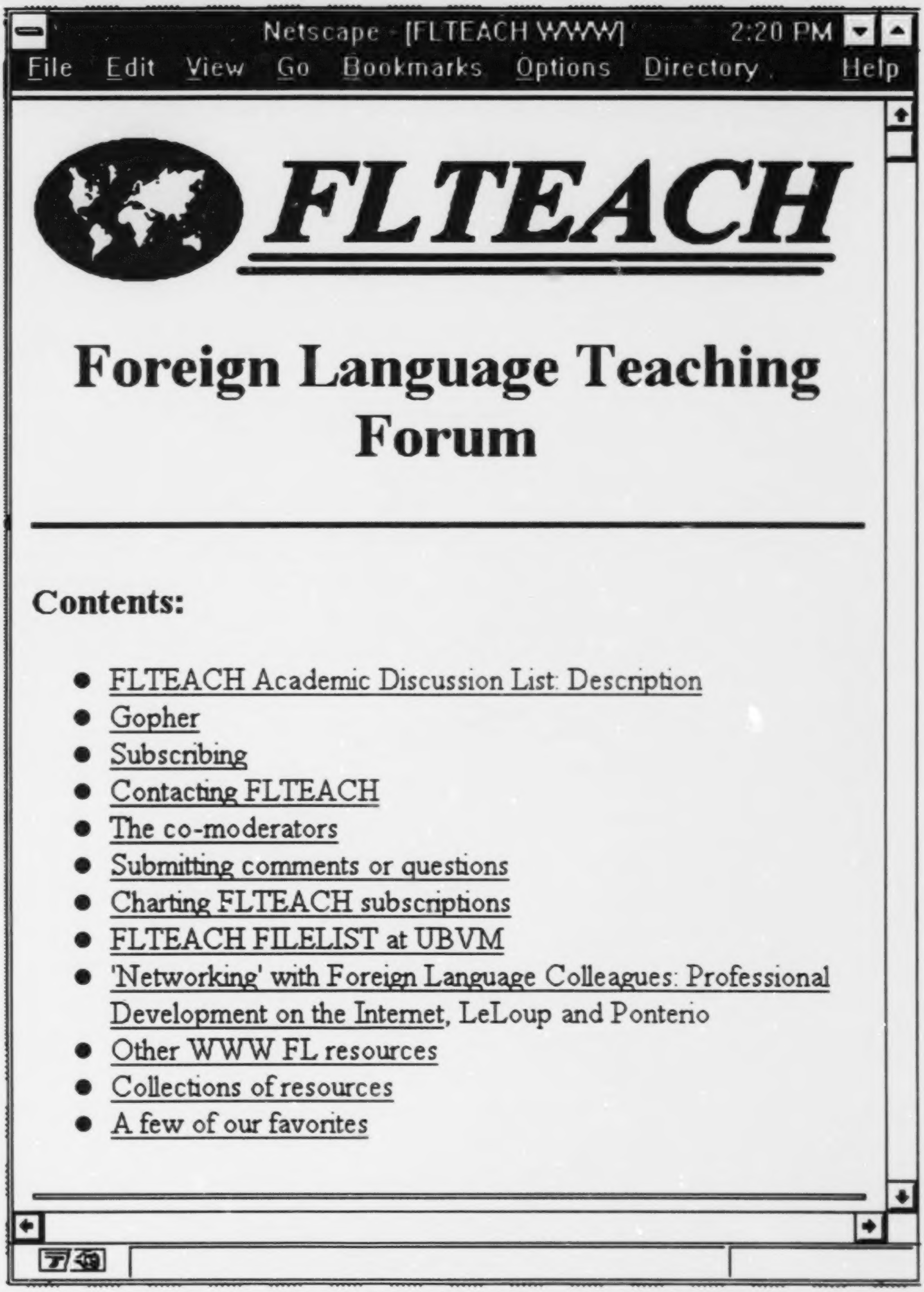
This page exists to provide Web-based support for FLTEACH list subscribers and also to assist FL teachers in locating Web resources for their professional use.

Why the Web? Gopher transports information from Gopher servers to your computer in the form of menu items and files of many specific data types: text, sound, image, executable software, links to other data, etc., but Gopher transports files one at a time. These items can then be viewed individually through a browser designed to display that specific type of information on your own computer. Yet, it can be advantageous to display information that simultaneously uses several of these formats in an integrated presentation. For example, a photograph or motion video might appear within a paragraph while a voice explains something about what the viewer is observing. Like Gopher, the Web connects the user to other Internet accessible resources available at many other locations, but the WWW goes beyond this to provide a format that allows different types of media to be mixed. Because hypertext is a format in which a text can contain within itself links to many other texts of various types, a WWW link can point to nearly anything, even a Gopher, allowing the FLTEACH page to include the Gopher within itself. Beyond these basics, the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) that is used to format Web documents is a vastly superior tool for text formatting than the rather styleless format that is possible in most Gopher text files.

A WWW page is not fixed in form like a book or article. It can be dynamic, changing as needed to fulfill its function. Its creation is more a process of maintenance than the production of a product. Many of the links on the FLTEACH page point to WWW resources that have been prepared by other FL professionals. Unlike the Gopher, the WWW page does not attempt to make an extensive collection of FL related sites. In many schools, teachers have been "surfing" the net and developing their own lists of the useful resources that they and their students have found worthwhile. Because of the nature of hypertext, links to these collections can become a part of the FLTEACH page where FL teachers can see what sites their colleagues at other institutions have been using. Thus the work of all these professionals contributes to the value of one page, not in itself but as a part of a network. Using hypertext, the WWW page can place this information in a meaningful context. Whereas the Gopher shows a menu of titles that can be accessed, the WWW page displays a narrative that explains what such titles are all about.

Before examining the use of these collections, we will take a look at the overall structure of the page. The FLTEACH WWW page is divided into two main sections, each containing a number of sub-sections. The first part provides various kinds of information about the FLTEACH project while the second section contains aids for finding other FL electronic resources on the net. The "Contents" listing provides links to each subsection of the page. Selecting a topic moves the viewer through the page, positioning it to that topic (see illustration).

The introductory area identifies the function of the page and its relation to the FLTEACH discussion list. This includes information about how to subscribe and to use the list, as well as how to contact the moderators. A data entry form on the page itself allows anyone to submit questions or comments via e-mail directly to the list moderators without even leaving the page. Graphical information about the growth in the number of FLTEACH subscribers appears as a chart in image format. The Gopher section goes beyond a presentation of information by including a link to the Gopher itself. By selecting this link, the user can access the Gopher and all of its functions from within the WWW page. All of the files that are stored in the FLTEACH FILELIST can also be viewed directly from this page. This includes the archive of


Netscape - [FLTEACH WWW]
2:20 PM
File
Edit
View
Go
Bookmarks
Options
Directory
Help

FLTEACH

Foreign Language Teaching Forum

Contents:

- FLTEACH Academic Discussion List: Description
- Gopher
- Subscribing
- Contacting FLTEACH
- The co-moderators
- Submitting comments or questions
- Charting FLTEACH subscriptions
- FLTEACH FILELIST at UBVM
- 'Networking' with Foreign Language Colleagues: Professional Development on the Internet, LeLoup and Ponterio
- Other WWW FL resources
- Collections of resources
- A few of our favorites

list postings, articles, and other information provided to subscribers. (See Gopher description above.)

The introductory area identifies the function of the page and its relation to the FLTEACH discussion list. This includes information about how to subscribe and to use the list, as well as how to contact the moderators. A data entry form on the page itself allows anyone to submit questions or comments via e-mail directly to the list moderators without even leaving the page. Graphical information about the growth in the number of FLTEACH subscribers appears as a chart in image format. The Gopher section goes beyond a presentation of information by including a link to the Gopher itself. By selecting this link, the user can access the Gopher and all of its functions from within the WWW page. All of the files that are stored in the FLTEACH FILELIST can also be viewed directly from this page. This includes the archive of list postings, articles, and other information provided to subscribers. (See Gopher description above.)

The "Other WWW Foreign Language Resources" area is subdivided into a number of sections. These include Collections, German, Chinese, French, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, Other. The first, "Collections," is certainly the most important because it derives from the basic philosophy of FLTEACH, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and articulation among professionals at different institutions. Here, a teacher using the Web for the first time or updating a locally produced menu of selections can see what colleagues at other schools have found. Creating and maintaining an all encompassing listing of resources is far too big a job, not only because of the number of sites but also because addresses on the network tend to change, leaving links that no longer point anywhere. The effects of this instability can be transient or permanent, so discovering and tracking down problems can be very time consuming. If many people are using a listing, the chances of identifying and fixing problems becomes much greater. As a result, the collection becomes more valuable through a collaboration between those who are maintaining it and those who are using it. An important advantage of using hypertext for such a listing is that descriptive information about a page can be much more informative than a simple listing of the names of links. Thus some kind of displayed evaluation of the usefulness of a particular site can assist a teacher in quickly identifying potentially interesting resources to be suggested for consultation by students doing class projects or simply browsing on their own.

The ability to access a number of alternative resource collections prepared by many professionals working in various types of institutions in distant geographical areas has several distinct advantages over a system with a single large collection. It is valuable to have multiple sources for times when some element in the network is not functioning properly. This certainly happens on occasion, and it seems to occur most frequently at the worst possible time. We all know that when using technology in a classroom, it is essential to have at least one "plan B" to avoid the frustration of a presentation that flops for technical reasons. Multiple access points can sometimes help get around certain network problems and possibly recover from a near disaster.

Varied points of view also add value to such collections. A page that might seem to be of little interest to a French major in a university might be the basis of a great lesson for a middle school program. For this reason, it is important that teachers at all levels participate in identifying useful resources. Yet, ideas also need to cross levels. That middle school WWW activity might also turn out to work at the college level once the teacher understands the ideas that make it successful. Articulation is valuable because it allows us to share ideas, not just information. Our diverse backgrounds make this exchange of ideas among institutional levels even richer than might otherwise be the case.

The listing of FL WWW collections can change at any time, but the current listing will provide an idea of the variety. Some are major projects with institutional support, others are the results of the efforts of single individuals working in their spare time. While some attempt to be extensive, others seek to address a specific need.

Collections of WWW FL Resources

- The Dartmouth Language Resource Center is an excellent WWW language resource and the place to go for information about the Language Learning and Technology International Information Forum List (LLTI).
- The Human Language Resource Page, located at Willamette, has an extensive collection of resources including many for Less Commonly Taught Languages (including Klingon).
- The WWW Resources for the Humanities at Berkeley is also quite good.
- The Resources for Foreign Languages and Literatures collection at Skidmore College has pointers to resources in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish thanks to Cindy Evans.
- The Ohio University Call Language Page contains a useful collection.
- The Foreign Language Department at the University of Toledo has a very well developed Home Page.
- Andreas Lixl-Purcell has collected German Resources and Russian Resources at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- For ESL try the English as a Second Language Home Page and the DEIL LinguaCenter at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- TenneseeBob Peckham at the University of Tennessee at Martin has an excellent collection called: Tennessee Bob's Famous French Links!
- Sean S. Davis created Language Links, a gateway to a great collection of resources for languages taught at Bethel High School, Hampton, VA where Sean teaches Spanish.
- Take a look at the VCU Trail Guide to International Sites and Language Resources by Robert Godwin-Jones.
- Thanks to Janice Paulsen and Pete Yang, CVanet and the University of Richmond are proud to announce their joint project to bring the Global Village to Central Virginia and vice versa.
- The Foreign Language and Culture hotlist from Douglas Brick's Hotlists at the University of Washington is quite extensive.
- The Language Learning Resource Center is located at Carnegie Mellon University.
- Ricardo Chavez at Santa Barbara City College has information about Spanish language links.
- The French Page — La Page française was prepared by the French Department at Appalachian State University.

Getting to know some of these collections can also help a teacher generate ideas for a locally maintained listing intended to support the teaching of language classes at his or her own institution.

Such collections also provide an excellent starting point for students with an interest in exploring authentic FL materials on their own. With implicit direction from the developers of these sites, students can become explorers, bringing information and their own observations back to their teachers and thus getting involved in the process themselves. In courses on the development of technology-based FL materials, these resources provide a ready source of sample materials that can be critiqued by students as they assimilate the criteria for evaluating the quality of such resources in preparation for developing new materials themselves. Bringing such materials within the reach of students empowers them to define their own interests and be more active in determining the direction of their own education.

In addition to a short list of the personal FL favorites of the FLTEACH moderators, organized by language, this WWW page also includes links to other useful resources that might not be language specific. Many of these are service sites run by various projects, associations, or government agencies.

Other Resources

- The Agora Language Marketplace is distributor of non-traditional, low-volume teaching materials and a source of information about materials for FL teaching. Agora Language Marketplace is run by Carolyn Fidelman and is seeking interested authors.
- LCEN, the Listening Comprehension Exercise Network, produces "instant" exercises based on news broadcast over SCOLA and Univision in five languages: French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish.
- The National Registration Center for Study Abroad (NRCSA) helps students looking for "Intercultural and Foreign Language Immersion Programs Around the World."
- Take a look at the I'M Europe Information Marketplace by ECHO, the European Community Host Organization information service. This is an excellent source for information about the European Community.
- OneEurope Magazine is an online magazine by ÆGEE, a European students' association.
- Welcome to Eurogopher is worth a look.
- Some of the sites you can access through The Virtual Tourist — World are quite good.
- The Clearinghouse for Subject-Oriented Internet Resource Guides will help you find academic resources on the Internet.
- The Project Muse at Johns Hopkins University will show you a sample of online academic journals. Of note to language teachers is Modern Language Notes.

As better descriptions of these services are incorporated into the presentation of the listing, the WWW page becomes an easier tool to use, saving time and thus encouraging the use of the resource by busy teachers who simply cannot afford to reinvent the wheel at every turn. By providing this service, the FLTEACH project seeks to help teachers support each other in their efforts to explore new methods for use in their classes by facilitating the exchange of ideas with colleagues.

Conclusion

FLTEACH is contributing to making the foreign language educational community a more integrated, cohesive group in terms of professional goals, aims, and direction. The result of ongoing dialogue with colleagues on the list will inevitably be a better-informed and prepared cadre of FL practitioners that can further the objectives of foreign language education in local, regional, national, and international venues and at all educational levels.

This article has set forth the mission of FLTEACH and explained its many functions, options, and benefits to the end of encouraging increased participation on the part of FL professionals everywhere. Granted, initial access and acculturation may be a challenge and may appear to be quite time-consuming. Nonetheless, the ensuing rewards will more than make up for the time invested at the beginning. Foreign language professionals should know, better than most, that useful learning is often a long-term process. Just as FL proficiency is not attained with a mere year or two of study, neither will one or two hours in front of the computer make e-mail experts or fearless Web surfers out of everyone. It will take some time and effort for those new to the world of computers and the Internet to feel at ease on the technological superhighway, but the results will be extremely valuable.

Hopefully, the reader has been convinced of the worth of becoming technologically aware and of participating in the discussions on FLTEACH as components of continuing professional development. A strong, collaborative body of FL professionals will ensure achievement of common FL educational goals.

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To subscribe to FLTEACH, send an e-mail message to:
listserv@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu

In the body of the message write:
subscribe FLTEACH Yourfirstname Yourlastname

APPENDIX B

BASIC INTERNET TOOLS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATORS

Introduction

The Internet is a vast place, and the amount of information potentially available is hard to imagine. More difficult still is conceptualizing how it all works and how one can access this wealth of resources. Fortunately, tools exist to assist in Internet navigation, and what could be a truly daunting undertaking has been facilitated by a number of applications and protocols. This chapter aims to define briefly some of the various tools Internet users can employ to make their way around the Internet, extract useful information, and in general turn it into a useful and user-friendly commodity for them.

The projects described in this book make use of all sorts of Internet applications and mechanisms, and it behooves the foreign language (FL) teacher reading this volume to understand the protocols that make such projects possible. Having a better understanding of how the Internet works and how various programs can be used for specific FL teaching purposes will enable FL educators to venture confidently into the net and make it an extension of their classroom. It will enhance their ability to conceive Internet-based projects and to solve the inevitable problems that appear. To that end, this chapter will discuss electronic mail (e-mail), Gopher, FTP, Telnet, USENET groups, LISTSERV lists, and the World Wide Web (WWW), with particular attention to relevance for FL teachers. Suggestions will also be made for where and how to find materials that are germane to the goal of enhanced FL education.

E-mail

The most common method of using the Internet is e-mail. If you are reading this book, you probably have e-mail access of one form or another. If you do not, it is highly likely that you will run out and get it after you finish reading about all of the wonderful projects you can do via e-mail and other electronic communications connections to the Internet. E-mail is precisely what its name implies: an "electronic post." To use e-mail, you must have an access (preferably local to minimize phone charges) to the Internet, which can be provided by numerous means. Many FL educators have e-mail access through their home institution. Such accounts are often assumed to be "free," but make no mistake: somewhere, someone is paying for the Internet connection. Other possibilities for access include freenet or communitynet systems, which function much like public broadcasting stations dependent on listener donations for survival, and a plethora of commercial enterprises offering Internet access among their commodities (e.g., CompuServe, AOL, Prodigy). E-mail access also necessitates software to enable your computer to talk to the host computer, ensuring that you can issue commands, receive mail, and generally function in the e-mail program. Many e-mail software programs exist, and each has its own system of commands and operations. You need to check with your local e-mail service provider to obtain instructions that are specific to your particular system.

General e-mail functions include: sending and receiving new mail, saving mail to a file system, replying to a message received, including parts of previously received messages in responses, and forwarding mail. Because the commands for these functions are different in each software program, you need to pay close attention to how your own system functions. For example, in some e-mail programs, hitting the "r" key causes a reply message to be sent to the sender of the message. That may be fine if you think you are replying to a message or posting from an individual. However, if the message came from a discussion list (see below) and was merely "signed" by the individual, your "reply" action could cause your response to go out to a list of hundreds of other subscribers instead of just that one individual. The potential for embarrassment is obvious; hence, it is wise to learn the mechanics of your e-mail system and exercise caution in carrying out commands. If you *do* make a mistake along these lines, rest assured that you are one in a long, long line of Internet users who have done the same thing. Laugh at it, learn from it, and carry on.

E-mail is becoming so common that it will soon be as essential as the real postal service and the telephone. Indeed, people now routinely ask you for your "e-mail address" in addition to or *instead of* your postal address and phone number. In fact, it has been suggested that because of the Internet "... your telephone is superfluous" (Krohl, 1991). Tell *that* to the adolescents you teach! Typically, an e-mail address includes some semblance of the user name, the symbol @, and a domain name indicating where the user's access origin is (e.g., *ponterior@snycorva.cortland.edu*). The information to the left of the "@" pertains to the user (here, Robert Ponterio); the information to the right is the address of the host computer system (in this case, SUNY/Cortland) and generally gives an indication of the nature of the access site. For example, *.edu* signifies an educational site, while *.com* represents a commercial provider. Countries other than the United States have their own tags at the end of e-mail addresses that are generally recognizable abbreviations (e.g., Canada=CA; Ecuador=EU; France=FR; Germany=DE; Switzerland=CH, and so forth).[5]

Because e-mail is an international phenomenon, people all over the world are using it to communicate. A few problems that are peculiar to FL educators should immediately come to mind as a result. People using e-mail will want to communicate in their own language, and FL teachers will want to tap into this potentially rich source of target language dialogue and authentic materials. One problem, of course, is the transmission of accents for languages with Roman character sets. The normal 7-bit data path used for English and the ASCII character set does not provide for accents. In fact, when people attempt to put them in, the result can be quite displeasing (e.g., il a r=E9clam=E9 le retour des pi=E8ces d=E9tach=E9es =E0 Caen). An 8-bit data path, which basically doubles the number of characters available, does allow for accents and, while not yet entirely standardized, does provide most of the characters needed for typing French, German, and Spanish.

Unfortunately, most e-mail programs do not easily manage these 8-bit character sets yet, but with more and more users demanding this service, improvement in this area should be forthcoming. In the meantime, one solution is a standard called MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions), which employs a 7-bit coded format for 8-bit character sets (known as Quoted-Printable). Similar encoding schemes are available to assist in the transmission of non-Roman character sets such as those needed for Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, or Russian. FL teachers with MIME compatible software can send and receive these character sets even if their particular e-mail system does not support an 8-bit data path. In addition, a 16-bit Unicode standard exists that allows the representation of all the world's written languages in its 65,536 symbols. This standard is already being employed by corporations that do international business, and it will become more common if FL teachers (who *also* "do international business") demand it from their service providers.

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[5] For a comprehensive explanation of Internet addresses and abbreviations, please see Crispen (1994).

Mailing Lists (LISTSERV)

Mailing lists are discussion groups on the Internet established for people with common interests. These lists are frequently referred to as LISTSERV lists, although LISTSERV refers to a particular type of server. Othermail servers do exist, such as Listproc and Majordomo. (The commands used in the following section to describe various list functions are LISTSERV commands.) Lists are perhaps the most basic electronic communications resource accessed through e-mail, and many exist that have a FL focus. Undoubtedly, many of these FL lists are mentioned in connection with the projects detailed elsewhere in this volume. Some are discussion lists: FLTEACH (Foreign Language Teaching Forum) was founded expressly for professional communication, articulation, and professional development of FL educators (see previous article in this volume). Among the many goals of FLTEACH is an increase in sharing information, ideas, and materials between and among FL educators (cf. LeLoup & Ponterio, 1994, 1995).

Other online forums can be categorized as service lists: The LLTI (Language Learning and Technology International) list distributes information about all aspects of the technology used in language teaching. Subscribers post information or questions about language labs, video, computer applications, and any technological questions related to language teaching. LLTI is also a forum where subscribers can discuss the value of products or new trends in the profession. The Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (K–12) list (IECC) provides a service for those FL teachers seeking partner classrooms for international and cross-cultural electronic mail exchanges. It is not a list for discussion or for people seeking individual penpals.

Finally, language-specific lists are well-represented on the Internet. Literally hundreds of online discussion groups address particular foreign language interests, and they are as specific and diverse as their membership permits and supports. List topics range from the very general, where FL teachers of the same language converge and dialogue (e.g., *EDUFRANCAIS@UNIV-RENNES1.FR*, an international list where French teachers at all levels and in all countries can exchange cultural and linguistic information about France and other francophone countries; *ESPAN-L@TAUNIVM.BITNET*, a "lista para profesores de español"), to very singular and esoteric topics (e.g., *MEDTEXTL@UIUCVMD*, a discussion group dealing with "Medieval Text — Philology, Codicology, & Technology") to highly specialized lists focusing on uncommonly taught (at least in the United States!) languages (e.g., *READER@TASHA.POLY.EDU*, a discussion in English of Arabic [+ Farsi, Urdu, etc.] script on computer).[6] Be cautioned that, while many of these lists appear to remain relatively stable over time, others may wane or undergo some sort of metamorphosis such as a change in name, address, or primary focus.

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[6] For a comprehensive list of language related lists, please see David Bedell's List of Foreign Language Lists, available on the FLTEACH WWW page and also on the FLTEACH gopher.

Joining and then participating on a list are relatively simple processes, and knowing a few rules will ensure successful and happy list membership. First, lists generally are associated with two addresses: one for posting and one for sending commands to LISTSERV to perform functions. For example, to subscribe to FLTEACH, you would send a command to:

LISTSERV@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU

In the body of the message, you would write:

subscribe *FLTEACH Yourfirstname Yourlastname*

Thereafter, to post to FLTEACH, you send your messages to:

FLTEACH@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU

The LISTSERV address transmits commands to a *computer*, and the list address transmits messages to *people*. If you remember this essential difference, you will not experience any embarrassing moments such as the one referred to above in the section on e-mail or frustrating silence after asking a "computer" what it thinks about a certain textbook or if it has ever chaperoned a student group to the Amazon.

Lists come in "all shapes and sizes," and some are busier than others. The number of daily messages varies greatly among lists and during different times of the year. A general rule of thumb to follow is to read your messages on a regular basis to avoid overflowing mailboxes, which generate error messages and cause much consternation in list owners/managers. Mailbox capacities vary from system to system, so be sure and check frequently on your own space allocation. Most lists offer options such as INDEX and DIGEST as alternative ways to receive daily postings and to assist in managing high volume list traffic. With INDEX, just the subject headings of messages are sent, and you can select those messages you wish to read and then send for them separately. With DIGEST, you receive one large message periodically from the list, containing all the postings therein. You can then download this message into your word processor and browse for those individual messages of interest specifically to you. When you are going to be away from your account for an extended period of time, it is wise to change your mail setting for high volume lists to NOMAIL to prevent mailbox clogging. Again, all of these commands should be sent to the LISTSERV address and *not* to the list.

Participation on lists can be active or passive and is usually a personal decision. You are generally free to "lurk" on a list, which means you read and perhaps pass along information that you have gleaned from the list to colleagues, or you may post as frequently as you choose. Some lists are moderated, which generally means that the list managers must approve all messages submitted. Some lists require that members meet certain criteria before permission to subscribe is granted. This regulation is generally an attempt to maintain the focus of the discussion, a move greatly appreciated by most list members. Upon subscribing to a list, members generally receive a welcome message with all sorts of information that appears superfluous at the time but that will be desperately needed later on (such as how to unsubscribe from the list and so forth). Save this message or you could "ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston..." (Kingston Trio, 1962).

When and if you decide to enter the LISTSERV fray, you need to observe certain rules of netiquette. Some that have to do with mechanics have already been mentioned above, namely being aware of where and to whom your message is headed. In addition, the considerate poster adheres to a few general standards regarding the tenor of messages and message content itself.

First, please identify yourself at the end of your message, including your e-mail address. Many systems strip the headers from messages, and often people simply do not know the originator of a post nor their address and therefore cannot respond. Most systems have provisions for appending a signature file, which can contain necessary information for contacting a poster (e.g., name, e-mail and postal addresses, work affiliation, phone number). Some people personalize these with computer "drawings" or favorite quotes from famous people (or themselves). Secondly, remember that messages on the Internet can come across in an extremely impersonal manner. The typical body language, facial expressions, and other adjuncts that enrich our face to face conversations are totally absent in this environment. A phrase meant to be funny can easily be interpreted as sarcasm or an unnecessary jibe that was totally unintentional. Whenever possible, use emoticons or those smiley faces :-) to indicate where humor should be understood, for example, or the winking face ;-) to express irony, and be sensitive to the readers at the other end of your message.

Telnet

Not only can you reach other people on the Internet, you can also log into other computers. The tool for accomplishing this virtual feat is called Telnet. It is the Internet's remote login application and allows you to sit at your computer and login to any number of computers across the room, the campus, the country, or around the world. This one word (i.e., the application it represents) can give you access to libraries, newspapers, public programs, and many services that other computers offer to Internet surfers. It can also give you access to your home account when you are out of town if you can log into a local provider where you happen to be. This possibility can be very useful if you are subscribed to many lists and forgot to set yourself to NOMAIL during your absence. It can also allow you to stay in contact with colleagues in case you need last-minute information for presentations or any other reason.

To find out if you have access to Telnet through your local service provider, type the word *telnet* at your command prompt. If you are using an icon-driven system, click on the Telnet icon. If you have a Telnet connection, the program will start up. Some programs offer a direct instant connection if you type *telnet* and the Telnet address all on the same line. If you do not have Telnet, you will probably get an error message, but you will *not* have broken your computer or the Internet.

Once you have established the availability of Telnet on your local system, you need only find Telnet addresses and then you can literally "go to town" or Katmandu or wherever you want, providing you have the Telnet address. These addresses look much like the righthand part of e-mail addresses, and they sometimes have a number at the end. This number indicates the port or particular computer or server on the system; the default port is 23 and is generally omitted. For example, the Telnet address for the home of FLTEACH (default port) is:

SNYCORVA.CORTLAND.EDU

Once you start up the Telnet program and are connected, you will usually see a screen message that indicates the escape character. Make sure you make a note of this character so you can leave the remote system when you are finished with your Telnet session. A typical escape character is "CTRL-]" or carat-left bracket, but these sometimes change. Next, you will need to know the login and password of the server where you are attempting to connect. If you are headed to a public site, you will most likely have this information or it will be provided to you. If it is not and you do not know it, simply quit the Telnet session and go elsewhere or home. The "close" command is also handy when you want to disconnect from a remote system in the middle of a connection. When you are logged into a remote system, the commands pertain to *that* system and not yours. If you need assistance, type "help" to see what commands will work on that particular server.

Gopher

Gopher is a menu-driven application that allows you to browse all kinds of Internet resources. The analogy of a library card catalog has been used frequently to describe this tool (Crispen, 1994; Krohl, 1993). Essentially you go exploring "library" sites around the world and, when you find something interesting, you ask the Gopher to "go fer" it and bring it to your computer screen. The exploration and information transfer are possible because all of these menus or "libraries" are interconnected, making up a vast Gopherspace.

In order to venture into Gopherspace, a Gopher client running on the local system is necessary. The fastest way to find out if you have one is to type the word *gopher* at the command prompt. Again, in an icon-driven system, click on the Gopher icon. If a Gopher client is available and running, the program will start up. If you have a Gopher server at your local site, its home or root menu will most likely show up on the screen. If you do not have Gopher access, you will get an error message but once again, you will *not* have broken your computer or the Internet.

Now you can begin your exploration of Gophers all over the world. Each menu can potentially lead you further into that "library" or into another with an entirely different collection of resources. The menus operate in a hierarchical system of pathways to help you find your way back home. It is not necessary to leave breadcrumbs along the way — you merely type "u" for "up a menu" until you reach your destination. You can also "quit" the program entirely and exit. Some Gophers are text-based while others have graphical representation (icons) to lead the browser from menu to menu.

One nice feature of Gopher is the ability to make bookmarks once you have arrived at a location you think you would like to return to in the future. This capability provides a wonderful shortcut for the next time you want to go directly to, for example, the weather report in Ushuaia. To make a bookmark in most Gopher applications, you press a designated key and the current item is added to your bookmark list. Single items or an entire menu can be added. You can also delete bookmarks, view your bookmarks, and perform many other commands as well. Check with your local service provider for operation and command instructions because Gopher client programs are all different. Some are freeware and can be downloaded from Internet sites, some cost (either shareware — also downloadable or commercial products), but they all have the basic purpose of accessing Gopherspace.

Below is an example of the Gopher root menu for SUNY/Cortland:

```
Home Gopher server: Gopher.cortland.edu
    1.   Welcome to SUNY Cortland's Gopher Server (1KB,01-Nov-1994)
    2.   New Items on this Gopher (764 Bytes,01-Nov-1994)
    3.   SUNY Budget Info ( Help save SUNY! )/
    4.   Administrative Information/
--> 5.   Academic Information/
    6.   SUNY Cortland Info/
    7.   News, Events, Sports and Calendars/
    8.   Library Resources/
    9.   Internet Services/
    10.  Computing Services/
    11.  Campus Life/
    12.  Cortland's WWW Home Page <HTML>
    13.  HELP!!!! /

    Press ? for Help, q to Quit                                Page: 1/1
```

By using the arrow cursors to create a path (foreign languages (ICC)/ → Language Electronic Resources/ → Foreign Language Teaching Forum (FLTEACH)/) through the menu hierarchy, the trail eventually leads to the FLTEACH home menu:

```
                      Home Gopher server: gopher.cortland.edu
--> 1.   Foreign Language Teaching Forum
    2.   FLTEACH Welcome Message
    3.   Foreign Language Electronic Resources (collected at FLTEACH)/
    4.   Search FLTEACH Subscriber Biographies <?>
    5.   FLTEACH Subscriber Biographical Information
    6.   Foreign Language Methods Syllabi (collected at FLTEACH)/
    7.   FLTEACH World Wide Web Page <HTML>
                                    -- Articles --
    9.   "'Networking' with Foreign Language Colleagues," LeLoup & Ponterio
    10.  Foreign Language related E-Lists collected by David Bedell
    11.  Electronic Pen Pals article by Adi Hofmann
                                -- FLTEACH Archives --
    13.  Search entire FLTEACH Archive <?>
    14.  Search ONLY messages sent THIS MONTH <?>
    15.  Listing of all FLTEACH messages for THIS MONTH/
    16.  Search ONLY messages sent in APRIL 1995 <?>
    17.  Listing of all FLTEACH messages for APRIL 1995/
                                -- FLTEACH Log Files --

    Press ? for Help, q to Quit                                Page: 1/2
```

Various symbols appear at the end of menu items to indicate what these items denote. In a UNIX Gopher client, the slash mark (/) at the end of a menu item indicates a gateway or path to another menu (e.g., #3). When no more slashes appear, you are at the end of that path. It is possible to establish keyword search engines in Gopher menus as well, as illustrated by the <?> symbol at the end of some menu items (e.g., #4). Selection of this item allows requests to be made to a data base for information. The marker <HTML> denotes a link to a WWW page item displayed using hypertext markup language (e.g., #7). The graphics that are generally associated with this platform are not visible through this Gopher server. Gopher items can also be used to launch a helper application to play a sound, display an image, or just save the file to disk.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FTP

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) and Telnet are two of the oldest Internet utilities, allowing two machines to communicate with each other. Whereas Telnet lets you log into an account at a remote location and interact as if you were there, FTP allows you to move files between accounts on different computers, wherever they might be, at home and at the office or even in different cities, as long as both computers have Internet addresses. It is rather like getting access to two disks between which you can copy files, only the disks are not on the same machine or even necessarily in the same country. The requirements are an FTP server running on a remote machine and an FTP client running on your local machine. There are two major ways to use FTP. You can move files between computers on which you have accounts or you can get files from an anonymous FTP server. We will look at both of these features.

Suppose that you have an account at SUNY Cortland and another at the Sorbonne, where you are doing research for your latest book. There are important text files that you need to access in both accounts as well as charts in the form of image files, digital sound recordings of the Paris Metro for your World Wide Web Paris page, and a flyer in Russian using a Cyrillic font in a WordPerfect document. You can use Telnet to log into your USA account from Paris, but that does not let you copy the files. Instead, you can use FTP from the Sorbonne account to log into the Cortland account:

```
$ ftp snycorva.cortland.edu
220 snycorva FTP Server (Version 3.2) Ready.
Connected to SNYCORVA.CORTLAND.EDU.
Name (SNYCORVA.CORTLAND.EDU:ponterior): ponterior
331 Username PONTERIOR requires a Password.
Password: Germaine
230 User logged in.
FTP>
```

When it is typed in, the password will *not* appear on the computer screen. The FTP client program on the computer in Paris has contacted the FTP server on the computer in Cortland allowing these two programs to connect the two accounts, the local one in Paris and the remote one in Cortland, in order to move files between them. To see what files are available on the remote machine in Cortland, type:

```
FTP> dir
```

This command will give you a listing of the current directory on the remote machine. To change to another directory on that machine, type:

```
FTP> cd new-directory-name
```

To move a file named "note.txt" from the remote machine in Cortland to the local machine in Paris, you first need to be sure that the file is located in the current directory on the remote computer. If it is not, then you must change the directory until you find the right file. The GET command is used to actually move the file:

```
FTP> get note.txt
```

Once the text has been transferred from the remote machine, a copy will be found in the current directory on the local machine. If you were sending a file in the other direction, from your local computer to the remote one, the command would be:

FTP> put note.txt

This process is fine for most text files sent on similar systems, but FTP has two modes that should be used to be sure that the file will be transferred in usable form. "ASCII" mode works for text files, and "binary" mode is required for anything other than simple text, i.e computer programs, images, sounds, and even word processed documents. The reason for using the ASCII mode is that text can be coded a bit differently on various computer systems. This is especially true of the extended characters used for accent marks. For most simple text files, FTP will try to make the characters look right on the receiving machine. The "note.txt" file had been created using a very simple text editor like the ones used by e-mail programs, so we were able to use ASCII mode by sending the command:

FTP> ascii

It is important to set the mode for ASCII or binary before beginning the file transfer. Binary mode does not bother about any kind of character set translation. In fact, it makes an exact copy of all of the codes in a file, no matter what they are. This is essential for any file in which there are bytes of data that do not represent text characters. Deciding which is best might be confusing in cases where a text has been typed in a word processor. Many word processors use special codes to keep track of information about fonts, margins, special character sets, and a host of other kinds of information about the text. These files are considered binary, and trying to transfer them using FTP in ASCII mode simply will not work. When in doubt about which mode to use, you can always try one and see if it works. In order to move the chart that is in an image file such as GIF or JPG, we first need to set the FTP mode to binary with the command:

FTP> binary

A sound file such as SND, AU, VOC, IFF, WAV or a moving picture file such as Quicktime or MPEG also must be sent as binary files. What about the Cyrillic text created in WordPerfect? Most text that has the format of a word processor document is really a binary file, so it also must use binary mode. There are some exceptions to this but not many. This word processing format can be a sure way to transfer texts that use non-Roman character sets. If you need to move a large word processor generated file but are not sure which format will work, do a test on a small file first, just to make sure that binary mode is what you need.

Many people on the Internet have decided to make files available to anyone who might wish to get them. For example, someone might write a computer program for practicing verb conjugation and decide to give copies to anyone who wants one. To do this, she would set up a special FTP account that anyone can use. Since the account would not belong to anyone in particular, the log-in name will be "anonymous." No password is needed either, but by convention people type in their e-mail address in place of the password to let the host know who they are. Logging into the anonymous FTP site at the University of North Carolina goes something like this:

```
$ ftp sunsite.unc.edu
220 calypso-2.oit.unc.edu FTP server (Version wu-2.4(39) Tue May 16
01:34:21 EDT 1995) ready.
Connected to SUNSITE.UNC.EDU.
Name (SUNSITE.UNC.EDU:ponterior): anonymous
331 Guest login ok, send your complete e-mail address as password.
Password: ponterior@snycova.cortland.edu
230- WELCOME to UNC and SUN's anonymous ftp server
```

Of course, you will not see your e-mail address when you type it in the place of the password because passwords do not appear on the screen. Anonymous FTP sites generally accept a limited number of users at one time, so getting into a popular site at peak hours can be difficult. If there are too many anonymous users, the FTP server will let you know. Once you have logged into the anonymous FTP site, you can use the DIR, CD, ASCII, BINARY, and GET commands to find and obtain anything there. Be sure to QUIT when you are ready to leave. Some FTP programs, especially on graphical systems like Macintosh and Windows, can be easier to use than command driven systems. You might see a directory listing for each computer on the screen and simply click on the commands that you wish to execute for changing directories, setting the mode, viewing, and moving.

Many files that are found on anonymous FTP sites are stored and transferred in compressed format. MS-DOS or Windows files often use ZIP while Macintosh uses STUFFIT. If you plan to get files via anonymous FTP, find out about the kinds of files that are used on your system and obtain the decompression software that you will need. You might even be able to use a World Wide Web browser instead of an FTP utility for access to anonymous FTP servers.

World Wide Web

The World Wide Web (WWW, W3, the Web) is perhaps the most exciting Internet application in use today because of its power, flexibility, ease of use, and widening access among the general public. A Web browser brings hundreds of thousands of sites around the world within your grasp in an instant. The ability to simultaneously present multiple media, text, images, sounds, moving pictures and to interact with the user to perform functions gives a Web page a power beyond other single medium applications. In a discipline that recognizes the importance of context in communication, the mutual support of the various components of this multi-media tool provide a clear advantage in facilitating the comprehension of authentic texts.

The flexibility of a Web page is amplified through the use of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) to control the graphical formatting of page elements to a degree unparalleled in other utilities. For example, though even the inclusion of French accents can still be problematic for some recipients of e-mail, the use of diacritical marks is standard procedure on the Web, where even the non-Roman character sets of Russian and Japanese have been in use for some time. Unlike some other applications that require the use of a command language, the operation of a Web browser is entirely intuitive. If you can point to something, you can retrieve it.

Retrieving a WWW page requires a browser and an Internet connection. If you can use applications like Telnet and Gopher, then the machine on which they are running has an Internet connection. If you are connected to a network via an ethernet connection, a PPP, or a SLIP connection, then the network most likely has an Internet connection, and you can probably run a WWW browser because your machine can send and receive TCP/IP, Internet data. If your own computer's connection to the network is limited to the equivalent of a VT100 terminal, then you probably cannot run a Web browser. Finally, speed is a concern. Below 14400 baud, a graphical WWW connection seems to be crawling because images and sounds create large files that can take some time to arrive. Finally, if your Internet connection does not permit graphical access to the WWW, it might be possible to run a text only browser like LYNX. That will display the text without any pictures or sounds. To find out more about the kind of connection you have, ask your local experts.

Many WWW client programs, also called browsers, are available both commercially and freely. Mosaic is a free browser, and Netscape is free to educators. Many Internet service providers furnish a browser as a part of the service. These browsers perform the same basic functions and essentially behave in similar ways. Like many other Internet tools, the Web is based on a client-server application. A WWW server is a computer program that is connected to the Internet and has the ability to send files from its hard drive to other computers on the network. To communicate with a server, your computer needs a WWW client that can send requests for data to the server. Since both machines have an Internet address, the messages that they send can find their destination. The most important message that a client sends to a server is a request for a file.

WWW pages are sent using Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP). This tells the client that the file being received is formatted in HTML, the Web standard. Other protocols exist for other utilities such as Gopher and FTP. A WWW browser begins by sending a request in the form of a Uniform Reference Locator (URL). A URL is an address that specifies a type of file, a host machine, and the location of the file on the machine.

http://www.cortland.edu/www_root/flteach/flteach.html

The first series of characters ending with a colon tells us that this file is a hypertext file. The name of the machine on which it is located, www.cortland.edu, can be found after the double slash. Following the next single slash we find the name of the directory, www_root/flteach; and finally, though not always, the file name is FLTEACH.HTML. The HTML indicates that this is a document with HTML formatting tags that can be interpreted by the browser. In addition to the text and formatting information in the HTML document, a document may contain other URLs that refer to other types of data, such as images and sounds, to complete the WWW page. Because the browser is configured for the computer on which it is running, it is able to display all of the elements of the WWW page in the best possible way for that particular machine. For example, the screen resolution, available colors, and the presence of special hardware for sound or video will determine what sort of display is possible. Thus the final appearance of a WWW page depends both on the formatting that is written into it and on the configuration of the browser.

Improvements in the abilities of a browser can often be obtained through the use of helper applications. Programs that are better able to display the images, sounds, or motion pictures in a page can take over the job from the browser when needed. The selection of helper applications is up to the individual user, and many different ones are available and are interchangeable.

Hypertext is not linear. It contains pointers that link one location to another. These links can be found within the same document or in other documents, on the same server or on any server connected to the network. The Internet defines a virtual space in which a link can refer to WWW documents on servers anywhere in the world. The links in a document are references to URLs. They are highlighted so the user can recognize them as links, and when a link is selected, the browser sends a request for a new document to the server in the URL contained in the link. When the new page arrives, it replaces the old one. Browsers make it easy not only to follow a link but to retrace your steps back from a link to the original document. With millions of possible links on the network, it is essential to keep track of interesting discoveries. Bookmarks allow a user to save the URLs for interesting sites so that they can be easily found again when needed. This flattens out the Web by producing a personal hotlist of sites that you might wish to find again.

Besides the nicely formatted, multi-media presentation of HTML documents, a Web browser can also display the files associated with other types of URLs. The ability to function as a Gopher and an FTP client, in addition to being a hypertext client, makes a the WWW the most versatile of the Internet tools. By integrating these other functions, this utility can greatly simplify navigation on the Internet.

Interactivity in a Web page is accomplished through something called forms submission. A form is an area on a page displayed by a WWW client in which the user can type information that will be sent back to the WWW server. What the server does with this information is determined by the developer of the page. The information could be stored, processed in some way, forwarded to someone, used to look up additional information, or even used to control a physical device. Almost anything that a computer is able to do can be done with information submitted in a form. A typed phrase could be converted into synthesized speech and returned to the user as a sound file; data could be collected about the page topic and later used for research purposes; a keyword could be used to look up an encyclopedia entry or photo archive that could then be sent to the user; a keyboard entry from a client could control a robotic camera whose output would then be sent back by the user as a part of the WWW page. A favorite use of the Web by graduate students is to connect a soda machine to the Internet and use a WWW page to find out if the machine has soda without having to walk down the hall. Believe it or not, there are quite a few soda machines on the Internet! The possibilities are limited only by imagination. As this volume suggests, FL teachers can certainly be as imaginative as thirsty graduate students.

USENET

USENET newsgroups are a popular way of participating in online discussions. The thousands of newsgroups can represent both advantages and disadvantages compared to e-mail discussion lists. Access to USENET is managed by a news reader. This application allows the user to select a number of groups and to routinely read new messages that have been posted to those groups. It does this by keeping track of the what the user has already read. The news reader can present messages in a particular group by topic, allowing the reader to easily follow the thread of a particular conversation or to delete the entire thread by marking it as "read." Messages from USENET do not fill the user's computer file space. A single copy of USENET groups can serve all of the users on a computer system and even those on other systems. All the information that needs to be saved in the individual's account is whether individual messages have been read or not. In some ways this is much more economical than distributing and storing multiple copies of e-mail postings.

On the down side, USENET newsgroups tend to be less focused than serious academic discussion lists. Less effort is involved in participating and it is easier to ignore a discussion, drifting in and out of the group. Anyone can join in a discussion at any time, and just about anyone does. This often leads to less commitment to the group as a community, resulting in a less collegial, less supportive conversational tone. Quite a bit of variety exists in this area in both e-mail discussion lists and USENET newsgroups, so generalizations can be dangerous. Wonderful discussions and terrible arguments can take place in both lists and newsgroups.

Because of the lower cost of overhead, newsgroups can be an easy way for students to get involved in conversations in the target language (TL) with peers in other schools or around the world. Groups targeted specifically towards the support of K–12 foreign language instruction such as:

k12.lang.deutsch-eng

k12.lang.esp-eng

k12.lang.francais

k12.lang.russian

permit students to make contacts that they can then pursue either in the group or in e-mail exchanges on their own. These are moderated to the extent that a teacher watches the postings to encourage use of the TL and to watch out for any other problems that might develop. Other groups serve as a forum for discussion of a target language culture. Here discussion tends to range from encouraging support of foreigners interested in the group's topic to nasty arguments about cultural differences. These groups can be interesting and even quite useful in their own way.

soc.culture.african

soc.culture.celtic

soc.culture.europe

soc.culture.french

soc.culture.italian

soc.culture.latin-america

soc.culture.mexican

soc.culture.spain

talk.politics.soviet

The language is far more authentic than that found in the K–12 groups. Nevertheless, we would hesitate to recommend them to students without careful supervision. Of course this can be true of many areas of the Internet where items can be found that might be inappropriate for an age group. Empowering students by giving them control of their access to information can lead to this potential problem no matter what medium carries the information. A well informed teaching and library staff that can supervise the students is an important element in developing appropriate uses of this technology.

Real-Time Communications Tools

One of the great advantages of electronically mediated communication is that two people do not necessarily need to be present at the same time in order to exchange ideas. Messages can be stored and read at the convenience of each participant in a discussion despite their separation in time and space. Yet for some activities, this advantage becomes a drawback. At times we really want to communicate in a face-to-face or synchronous situation in order to make the experience more realistic. As the Internet has increased its ability to move more and more data faster and faster, such real-time communication has come within our reach. A few Internet tools, IRC, MUDs, audio and video-conferencing, and LAN-based classroom management software, are geared specifically to such communication.

INTERNET RELAY CHAT

IRC (Internet Relay Chat) is a very popular communications network that presents a series of "channels" rather like a CB. By "joining" a channel, you can "talk" to all of the other people on the channel, no matter where they are in the world. Everything that you type will be seen instantly by all of the other people there, and you will see anything that they type. Channel names usually reflect the topics discussed, so joining a channel called "français" might be interesting for a French class, especially if you have made an appointment to meet some other Francophones there at a specific time. A quick look at the list of topics in IRC might convince you that it is not a good place to leave students unsupervised, but IRC does have a great potential for worldwide, interactive communication. It is possible for a group of people — for example, several classes in different parts of the world — to decide to have a virtual meeting on a particular IRC network. The first person to arrive can establish a private channel for the discussion and then allow only invited participants to join the channel. The possibilities for distance learning applications are quite exciting. IRC is a powerful tool whose value will depend on the specific applications that will serve your teaching objectives.

MUDs, MOOs, and MUSHes

MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions) have their origins in online role-playing games. Expanding on the idea of real-time multi-user communication in IRC, MUDs attempt to heighten realism by creating an impression of spatial extension. Rather than using a channel paradigm, MUDs and the related MOOs (MUD Object-Oriented) and MUSHes (Multi-User Shared Hallucinations) define and describe their space in terms of rooms. These rooms, the objects within them, and even the people who participate can be "seen" by "looking" at them. Because these functions generally are text-based, the participants "see" by reading. In many cases they can also collaborate on the creation of the space by writing descriptions themselves. A few students can enter a MOO, go into a room, and have a private conversation. A participant who enters one of these "places" takes a nickname and then proceeds to interact with the other people there according to rules that can be quite different at each site. Though some sites emphasize role-playing, others are virtual environments that focus on realistic social interaction. A group of language MOOs have been established where students can interact in the target language. The students themselves create a virtual environment incorporating aspects of the target culture.

TALK

Talk is an Internet program that connects two computers anywhere on the Internet permitting real-time interaction. Talk is limited to two participants. The screen is divided into two halves where each user can type in one and see what the correspondent is typing in the other. Students might be intimidated by the need to type in the target language in real time, but one could envisage a scenario where English students in Germany type German to German students in the U.S. who, in turn, type English back to their German counterparts. Each group would see the language in use by native speakers from the other side of the world. The synchronous communication helps to give the language a reality that cannot be matched.

Beyond the text-based Talk program, one can find audio conferencing systems that let individuals using multi-media computers communicate directly by speaking into a microphone. Their voices are digitized and then divided into little packets that are sent over the Internet to another computer. At this point, the packets are collected and placed in the proper order. Then the data is converted back into sound and played on the receiving computer. Voice communication on the Internet through a variety of programs such as Maven for the Macintosh is improving as the speed of data transfer gets better. This process does require a fast, high quality Internet connection.

CU-SeeMe

Video conferencing requires even more resources than voice conferencing. Two computers, each one using a microphone and a video camera, can be connected via the Internet to allow two individuals to converse face to face. The transmission speeds and data path required to accomplish this are not yet available to all who have Internet access, but as compression techniques improve, these programs have made huge gains in their ability to provide real-time video-conferencing. Though many such programs exist, one in particular has caught the attention of educators. CU-SeeMe is a free video-conferencing software developed at Cornell University. By using a reflector — a program that receives and retransmits a CU-SeeMe session to any number of participants — several individuals at widely separated sites can all see and hear each other at the same time.

The day will come when video conferencing on the Internet will be more common. Just imagine allowing students to talk "face to face" with a native speaker on the other side of the world or giving virtual oral exams to participants in a distance learning course.

CLASS DISCUSSION ON A LOCAL AREA NETWORK

Real-time conferencing can also have applications at close distances. Some students who are not comfortable participating in face-to-face class discussions or pursuing a question with a teacher outside of class participate more actively in computer mediated exchanges. One example of such an application is the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment. This program includes a number of classroom related tools for communication, composition, peer review, assignment distribution, and class management, but one in particular, Daedalus InterChange, is specifically designed to support real-time discussions via a local computer network. Working in pairs, small groups, or the whole class, students can compose contributions, see what the others have typed, and respond. The software maintains a transcript of the student exchanges that can be reviewed later for continued discussion, online or face-to-face, or for the preparation of reports.

These real-time tools do not pretend to replace essential face-to-face exchanges, but they can augment participation by helping students overcome a variety of impediments stemming from the specific individual learning styles or the physical circumstances of certain instructional settings.

Searching the Internet

Finding useful resources on the Internet can be a daunting task for a busy teacher simply because of the sheer amount of information that is out there. Although the advice gleaned by sharing ideas with colleagues is probably the most efficient way to learn about materials and projects (aside from reading this volume, of course), tools are available in the Internet itself that can help track down materials related to specific topics by performing keyword searches.

VERONICA

It is possible to browse through Gopher menus for hours, finding interesting items and keeping track of them by creating bookmarks. Several listings of FL related Gopher resources such as the one provided by FLTEACH can save a lot of time. Veronica is another tool that can help dig through the Gopher maze to find specific items. A Veronica is a search engine that will hunt through all of the Gophers in the world to find any menu items that contain the words requested. It does not look at the content of files that it finds, just the Gopher menu titles. Veronica searches through Gophers the world over to create and maintain an index of the words used in menus and where they can be found. Performing a Veronica search results in a Gopher menu of items from many different Gophers, all including the target words. If browsing through the items in this list turns up a useful resource, a bookmark will save it for future reference.

Veronica is not an Internet client application itself. It runs through a Gopher client, so to use it you must first be connected to Gopher. Veronica can be found as a menu item on many Gophers. If you have trouble finding local access to Veronica, one good place to find it is at the University of Minnesota. Go to the Gopher menu at:

gopher.micro.umn.edu

Then look at the item:

Other Gopher and Information Servers

and in that menu select:

Search titles in Gopherspace using veronica

The syntax for Veronica can be a bit complicated if you wish to fine tune the search, but a basic Veronica search is very simple yet quite powerful. When you select a Veronica search, Gopher presents a dialog box where you can type in the query that you wish to perform. Suppose you were looking for information about "French cuisine." The simplest Veronica search would be the query:

french cuisine

This will return any Gopher menu items found containing both words, "French" and "cuisine." Veronica does not pay any attention to capitalization. It will return a maximum of 200 items unless you tell it to get more. Note that this will not find "Cuisine in France" or "French food." You can also use boolean operands to target your search:

(french or france) and (cuisine or food)

returns the following list of items:

French Cuisine: Soigner son Cancer

CVF (Cuisine et vins de France)

France Fast Food Franchises

TESOL FRANCE: food (for thought)

HRC 171B: PCA IV — FRENCH CUISINE

French Cuisine: Soigner son Cancer

France Norwegian Food Imports Allowed

Note that searches often find a particular item in more than one location, as in the case of "French Cuisine: Soigner son Cancer" above. It is also useful to know that the wildcard * can be used to search for all words that begin with a string of letters. For example,

*franco**

will find "francophone," "francophile," "francophones," "francophiles," "francocentrism," "Franco's Spain," "Franco' italian restaurant," "Franco-Prussian," Franco-American," anybody whose name is Franco, etc. Wildcards can turn up unexpected results and should be used carefully.

The output of searches can be expanded or limited through the use of tags. It is possible to get more than 200 items by specifying the number:

franco* -m1000

This will yield up to 1000 items. You can also specify the type of item you want by using the -t tag. To find only text files, you could use the query:

franco* -t0

To find only sound files, you would send:

franco* -ts

Here is a list of possible types from the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) file, "How to Compose Veronica Queries" (Foster, 1994).

```
0 -- Text File
1 -- Directory
2 -- CSO name server
4 -- Mac HQX file.
5 -- PC binary
7 -- Full Text Index (Gopher menu)
8 -- Telnet Session
9 -- Binary File
s -- Sound
e -- Event (not in 2.06)
I -- Image (other than GIF)
M -- MIME multipart/mixed message
T -- TN3270 Session
c -- Calendar (not in 2.06)
g -- GIF image
h -- HTML, HyperText Markup Language
```

For the beginner, knowing how to use Veronica can help to change Gopher from a maze into a library.

ARCHIE

FTP servers around the world contain millions of files that might be of interest to someone. What should you do, though, if you are looking for a specific file (e.g., a computer program for producing accents in texts)? Someone told you about the program so you know it exists, but you do not know where to find it on the thousands of public anonymous FTP sites in the world. Because you are looking for a specific file, have some idea of the name, but do not know where to find it, Archie can come to the rescue. Just as Veronica searches Gophers to provide an index of keywords, an Archie server searches FTP sites the world over in order to prepare an index of all files that can be found.

To use Archie, you must first select one of these servers. They all have the same information so it is best to use the server nearest to you. If you are using an Archie client, you can then simply tell it which one of the more than 20 servers you want. In the Northeast US, we use *archie.rutgers.edu*. If you do not have an Archie client, you can still use Archie via Telnet:

telnet archie.rutgers.edu

If you ask Archie where to find "accents," the Archie server will send you a listing of all the FTP locations where the a file with that name can be found. The listing will allow you to use FTP to get the desired file from the nearest site or to select alternate sites if the closest one is busy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When we performed this search, Archie sent us information about 81 files at 28 different FTP sites whose name contained the word "accents." Archie also sent some information about each of the files found, helping us to decide which one we wanted. Many of these sites had more than one file with that name, but quite a few had a program called easy-accents.hqx for the Macintosh, which was just what we were looking for. We could then select the anonymous FTP site that was closest to our location:

```
Host oswego.oswego.edu
Location: /pub/info-mac/cfg
FILE -rw-r--r-- 4979 02-May-1995 17:55:36 easy-accents.hqx
```

and use our FTP client to go get it.

Archie is probably not a program that you need to use too often unless you are frequently updating software on a computer system. It is most useful for tracking down publicly available shareware programs, like many of the Internet utilities used in this volume, that are stored on the network. When you *do* need it, however, nothing else will do the job.

SEARCHING THE WWW

A number of tools exist to help navigate the WWW. Because Web pages contain much more information than Gopher menus or the file names at FTP sites, these programs can search through the entire text in a page and produce keywords that are more closely reflective of the topics in the page. Thus a keyword search performed by one of these utilities has a better chance of finding the pages that are related to the keywords you provide. Some even calculate a probability of the degree of relationship so they can present the listing in order from most to least likely to be what you are looking for. The complexity of these calculations means that, given differences in the performance of these WWW search tools, various users might have individual preferences for one or another utility. Try them out to see which seems best to you.

Because everything on the WWW is a page, these search tools are, in fact, Web pages themselves with their own URL. They use forms to obtain a list of keywords from the user and then search their database for matches. Like Veronica and Archie, these programs automatically scan the net in search of new information to add to their data base. When they find a new page, they extract keywords and also look through it for more links that they will eventually scan, and so on. The "Centre Universitaire d'Informatique World Wide Web catalog" (CUI WWW catalog) works by searching through a number of other collections of URLs. A few of the better known WWW search engines are:

Lycos:
    http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu

WebCrawler:
    http://webcrawler.cs.washington.edu/WebCrawler/WebQuery.html

WWW Worm:
    http://www.cs.colorado.edu/home/mcbryan/WWWW.html

Centre Universitaire d'Informatique World Wide Web catalog:
    http://cuiwww.unige.ch/w3catalog

Each of these allows the "surfer" to enter a series of keywords that will be used to match WWW documents. Generally, keywords need to be at least three letters long, and case does not matter. Any browser that you use will have specific directions and a description of what it does available right from its own page. After the query is submitted, the search page will return a result page with the addresses of all of the pages found to contain the keywords. By default, documents that contain all of the keywords are presented. Keywords must be carefully selected to target the search objective. Common words such as "school" will be found in so many documents that the search results will be useless. On the other hand, too many specific keywords could limit the search results to zero. Of course, a search that produces no results might also indicate a spelling error in typing the keywords, a possibility not to be too quickly discounted. Often, several searches are needed to get the desired results.

This simple procedure describes the CUI WWW catalog in Switzerland, making it the easiest to use. The others give the user more control by providing a few additional choices but to do so they also require a few extra decisions. The Lycos page or pages offer several options including searches of the entire data base of just the more common sites. If a search generates too many results, limiting the target in this way might help. The WebCrawler allows a limit to be placed on the number of documents presented. It also will let you modify the search to get documents containing *any* rather than *all* of the keywords. Be careful: this usually will get more than you bargained for. The WWW Worm (WWWW) provides the most control by restricting the area of the search and the number of resulting URLs. It also permits boolean operations using UNIX egrep expression syntax, not for the faint of heart. But even the WWWW can simply be used in default mode so the user need not worry about these options.

Much is there to be discovered by surfing the Web, but it does take time. You might enter a search for individual words of interest to generate a long list of sites and then explore to your heart's content: e.g., all references to "Russian" or "Russia" or "Soviet." Or if you know just what you are looking for, you might do your best to zero in on one particular Web Page by specifying a restrictive set of keywords. Either way, these tools make the millions of URLs on the Web manageable for even the novice user.

Conclusion

Having read this chapter, you are now "armed and dangerous": "armed" with resources to explore and "dangerous"-ly knowledgeable about the Internet and its many fascinating components. All that remains is to allot some time, sit down at the computer, and venture forth into the virtual world that comprises the Internet. The projects in this volume are meant to serve as an inspiration and as models for future endeavors in your own classroom. The explanation of the various Internet tools in this chapter has hopefully demystified the workings of this virtual reality and provided some confidence in handling the terminology and protocols necessary to accomplish the myriad of FL projects that are now possible with this technology. With a little bit of work and a lot of imagination and creativity, FL teachers can use these tools to make their classrooms come alive with the target language and help their students see first hand the realities and practicalities of target language use and culture in the real though virtual world.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

INTERNET FOR SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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SLTCC
TECHNICAL REPORTS

The Technical Reports of the Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center at the University of Hawai'i (SLTCC) report on ongoing curriculum projects, provide the results of research related to second language learning and teaching, and also include extensive related bibliographies. SLTCC Technical Reports are available through University of Hawai'i Press.

RESEARCH METHODS IN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

GABRIELE KASPER
MERETE DAHL

This technical report reviews the methods of data collection employed in 39 studies of interlanguage pragmatics, defined narrowly as the investigation of nonnative speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge. Data collection instruments are distinguished according to the degree to which they constrain informants' responses, and whether they tap speech act perception/comprehension or production. A main focus of discussion is the validity of different types of data, in particular their adequacy to approximate authentic performance of linguistic action. 51 pp.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR TESTING CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATICS

THOM HUDSON
EMILY DETMER
J. D. BROWN

This technical report presents a framework for developing methods which assess cross-cultural pragmatic ability. Although the framework has been designed for Japanese and American cross-cultural contrasts, it can serve as a generic approach which can be applied to other language contrasts. The focus is on the variables of social distance, relative power, and the degree of imposition within the speech acts of requests, refusals, and apologies. Evaluation of performance is based on recognition of the speech act, amount of speech, forms or formulæ used, directness, formality, and politeness. 51 pp.

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PRAGMATICS OF JAPANESE AS NATIVE AND TARGET LANGUAGE

GABRIELE KASPER
(Editor)

This technical report includes three contributions to the study of the pragmatics of Japanese:

- A bibliography on speech act performance, discourse management, and other pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of Japanese;
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(SLTCC Technical Report #3) ISBN 0–8248–1462–2 $10.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PEDAGOGY & RESEARCH IN INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION

ETILVIA ARJONA

This technical report includes four types of bibliographic information on translation and interpretation studies:

- Research efforts across disciplinary boundaries: cognitive psychology, neurolinguistics, psycho-linguistics, sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, measurement, aptitude testing, language policy, decision-making, theses, dissertations;
- Training information covering: program design, curriculum studies, instruction, school administration;
- Instruction information detailing: course syllabi, methodology, models, available textbooks;
- Testing information about aptitude, selection, diagnostic tests. 115 pp.

(SLTCC Technical Report #4) ISBN 0–8248–1572–6 $10.

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GABRIELE KASPER
(Editor)

This technical report includes six contributions to the study of the pragmatics of Mandarin Chinese:

- A report of an interview study conducted with nonnative speakers of Chinese;
- Five data-based studies on the performance of different speech acts by native speakers of Mandarin: requesting, refusing, complaining, giving bad news, disagreeing, and complimenting. 312 pp.

(SLTCC Technical Report #5) ISBN 0–8248–1733–8 $15.

THE ROLE OF PHONOLOGICAL CODING IN READING *KANJI*

SACHIKO MATSUNAGA

In this technical report the author reports the results of a study which she conducted on phonological coding in reading *kanji* using an eye-movement monitor and draws some pedagogical implications. In addition, she reviews current literature on the different schools of thought regarding instruction in reading *kanji* and its role in the teaching of non-alphabetic written languages like Japanese. 64 pp.

(SLTCC Technical Report #6) ISBN 0–8248–1734–6 $10.

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J. D. BROWN

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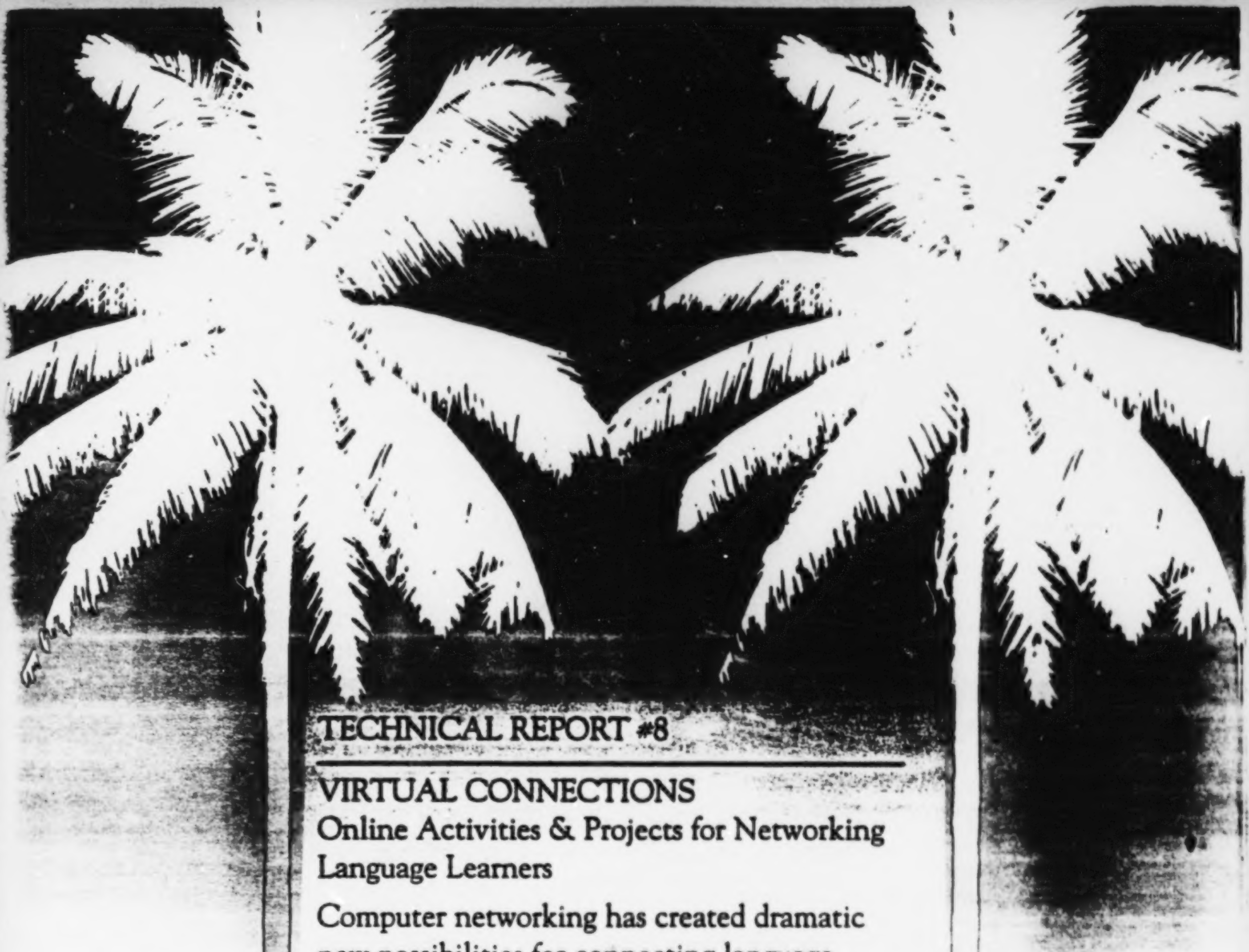

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